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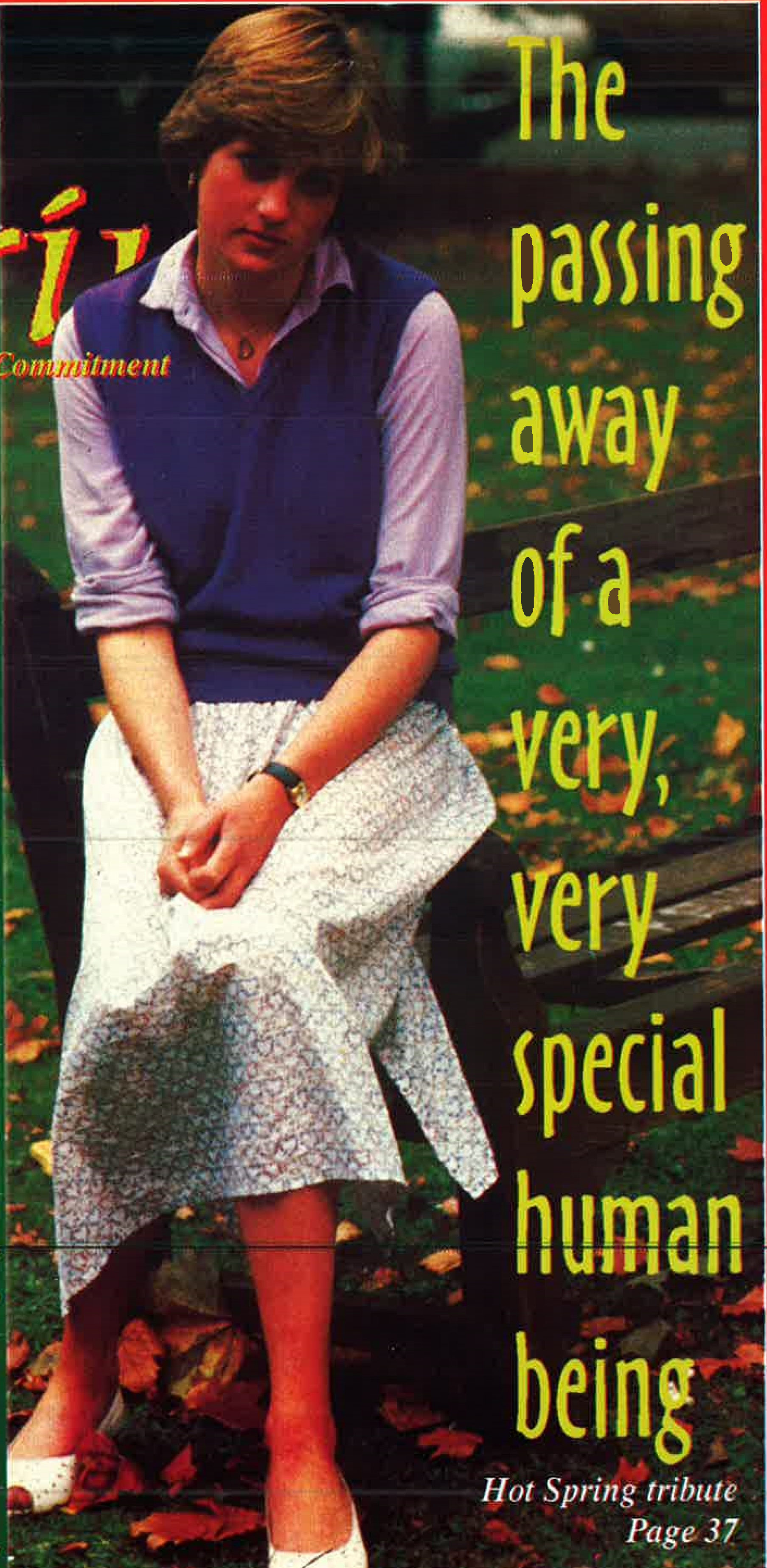
Hot Spri

Journal of Commitment



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Comment

The Enthronement of Falsehood

What is happening to the poor little Tamil town of Puliyankulam ? It was captured by Sri Lankan troops two and a half months ago, according to the Reuters office in Colombo. Now, the same Reuters news agency in Colombo says that the same Sri Lankan troops are trying to capture the same Puliyankulam all over again ! It does not seem to make sense , does it ? But then, nothing makes sense in a country like Sri Lanka, where the President herself claims that she has a mandate for peace in her saree fold, and because of that she is compelled to make war !That is logic for you !

REUTERS

To those with poor memories, this is what Reuters reported (word for word) from Colombo dated (mark the date) June 24:

"Sri Lankan troops on Tuesday cleared mines and booby traps from a northern town just captured from Tamil Tiger fighters during a major government drive into rebel-held territory...

"Military officials said troops took Puliyankulam, some 22 km. (14 miles) north of the government-held town of Vavuniya in the heart of the rebels ' northern Wanni stronghold, after fierce fighting in which more than 50 soldiers and rebels were killed.

Quoting unnamed military officials could be convenient, but the inconvenient fact is that once the despatch leaves the Reuters desk in Colombo, it would be no longer what some military officials say, but what Reuters says. Have those who represent international news agencies in Colombo lost sight of their journalistic professionalism, and become partisan purveyors of palpable untruths ? Military officials and spokesmen in Colombo are of course known to be champion peddlers of untruths, but that is to be expected; misinformation, disinformation and deception become increasingly necessary to countervail the failures on the military front. How does it become necessary for Reuters or AFP, Colombo to kowtow to government propaganda ? Maybe, it brings them their meal ticket. If that is journalism, there cannot be much difference between that profession and the oldest profession in the world. It is the same thing, selling yourselves for a living.

Perhaps, it would be pointless picking on individuals who have after all grafted themselves into a system that is rotten at the core. In today's Colombo, no one wants to hear the truth. Trying to tell the truth is like trying to preach chastity in a brothel house.

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What They Say

"I am not here to defend the LTTE. What I find unfortunately, is that if you make an objective view of the situation, you are considered to be pro-LTTE ".

- John W.Bradford, member of the Foreign Affairs Committee in the Australian Parliament, in an interview given in Colombo.(The Island, 10 Aug.)

* * * * *

"If Prabhakaran is killed or in some way eliminated there is still no guarantee that the LTTE will accept anything short of Eelam, but there is a chance."

- FRONTLINE editor N.Ram, interviewed by Frederica Jansz for SUNDAY TIMES, Colombo, 10 August.

* * * * *

"Is it to be war and more war, or is our President going to put her words to action by summoning a psychiatrist and have those pronounced as mentally retarded or insane, despatched to our famous institution on the outskirts of Colombo, either to be treated or put away, for future prosperity of our country? Optimism, coming even from a nut case, can be pardoned, but not deceit or distortion of the truth. Is it not an insult to the intelligence of the people to tell us that 80% of the war is over ...."

- Air Vice Marshal Harry Goonetilleke (Weekend Express 9-10 Aug.)

* * * * *

"The fact is, the Sri Lankan armed forces is fighting a highly trained, highly motivated, and committed organisation, whose standard of fighting is about the best compared to any other insurgency movement in the world. That is a fact ".

- General Kalkat, former Commander of the Indian "Peace Keeping Force" in Sri Lanka. (SUNDAY TIMES, 3 Aug.)

* * * * *

"The morale of the army is weak, while the LTTE's is still strong. The army in the recent past has not shown its might by defeating the LTTE in any of the attacks. We only hear of LTTE running over army camps".

- PLOTE leader Dharmalingam Siddharthan, quoted in the SUNDAY LEADER, 10 August.

* * * * *

"Back on leave for two days, a soldier told me, "Don't believe all the stories you hear that men from our segment of society join the services because we want to fight for our country. That is what we have to pretend when we join. I don't want to go back, but I am too scared to be a deserter. Believe me, a lot of us feel this way but carry on because our families can have a slightly better life"

- Vilma Wimaladasa, writing in the SUNDAY TIMES PLUS, 10 August.

* * * * *

"Colombo International School does not have its own playing field, gymnasium or swimming pool. By and large, the international schools are little more than glorified tutories. Yet, their standard of academic achievement is high, and it is probably this that lures parents able to cough up to Rs.100, 000 a year per child, bestowing on him or her with a good chance of entering a foreign university. After all, the President's own children attend an international school, her daughter actually being the head girl".

- SUNDAY LEADER comment, 3 August.

* * * * *

International

"I urge Palestinians to be prepared for the battle that Netanyahu is forcing upon us. What is coming is worse than what we have seen so far. We are prepared to eat grass. We will not give in".

Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat, following tensions with Israel.

* * * * *

"There can be no democratic society when the interests of any minority are not protected".

- Russian President Boris Yeltsin, vetoing a bill to restrict the practice of all but a few "traditional" religions.

* * * * *

"Genocide has increased in the last 10 years. Genocides have been committed this century "in whole" in colonial Southwest Africa (now Nabibia), Armenia, Nazi Europe, and Rwanda; and "in part" in the Soviet Union, Tibet, Burundi, Sudan, Pakistan, Uganda, Paraguay, Cambodia, East Timor, Guatemala, Afghanistan, SRI LANKA, Ethiopia, Iraq and Bosnia"

Genocide expert Helen Fein, quoted by NEWSWEEK writer Alan Zarembo, Newsweek, August 4.

* * * * *

"While I welcome Mo Mowlam as the first woman to be the British Secretary of State, we also want her to be the last British Secretary of State. I wish her well on her job."

- Sinn Fein leader Gerry Adams on Northern Ireland Secretary Mo Mowlam.

* * * * *

American journalist meets Tiger girls in Batticaloa

"They wear grenades and rifles as naturally as Levis and Lipstick"

By John D. Cramer

BATTICALOA, Sri Lanka

In the lantern light, she smiled shyly, her dark eyes demurely down, eyelashes flulttering, until she explained why she killed people.

"We are fighting for our independence," she said turning serious, a 20-year-old with six years of combat experience and a cyanide suicide ampule concealed under a camouflage shirt.

Secure in this rebel-held, rice paddy district along Sri Lanka's east coast, she and her friends gathered under palm trees in the night. All women in their late teens to early twenties, they are disciplined veterans of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam - ethnic Tamil guerrillas who wear their grenades and rifles as naturally as young women in other nations wear Levis and lipstick. They all are smiling the same strange smile of children who have seen something horrible and grown old before their time.

"Our liberation-what more is there?" she said, and her friends nodded all around in the flickering light, the echo of distant mortar fire penetrating the drone of crickets.

"Such beautiful, gentle faces," said a priest who sat nearby. "How conld anyone call them terrorists? They have the faces of angels."

For 14 years, Sri Lanka's Sinhalese majority and Tamil minority have waged a brutal war that has killed an estimated 30,000 people, drained the country's economy, fueled public fear and turned many towns and much of the countryside into armed camps. The two sides remain at a stalemate, and the conflict has engendered an odd mixture of fear and nonchalance among Sri Lanka's 18.7 million inhabitants.

Concentrated mostly in the North and East of this small, teardrop shaped island nation in the Indian Ocean, spasms of violence between government troops and the Tamil Tigers punctuate daily routine.

"Anyone who says the fighting has not affected their lives, directly or indirectly, is either a liar or an idiot," said a man in Colombo, the capital, where Tarnil Tiger suicide bombers have killed hundreds but which has been largely quiet in recent years.

"It really does not mean much to me," said another. "All Sri Lankans want the fighting to end, but my sons are not in the army, my business is not being hurt, and my family never goes to the embattled dustricts anyway."

Government troops are in the midst of a major offensive in the northern part of the island, but conflicting reports from both sides on the progress of the campaign cannot be confirmed.

The government says the offensive is going well. Government forces repulsed a rebel attack over the weekend, according to the Defense

Ministry, which said 200 Tamil Tiger rebels and 67 government troops were killed in the fighting, the Associated Press reported. Defense Ministry spokesman Kumara Dewage said the fighting in Omantai, 140 miles north of Colombo, was, "a good victory and a morale boost that gives us an upper hand."

But the government still does not control vast areas of the country and has been forced twice to extend amnesty to tens of thousands of deserters who fled after being thrust into combat with scant training against a hardened guerrilla force.

"They ask politely, lovingly, for what we can give," an old woman said. "The rich Tamils do not support the LTTE, but the poor do, and these [Tiger] boys and girls are only trying to get us what is rightfully ours."

For their part, the Tigers also claim the upper hand, but they have lost their northern stronghold on the Jaffna Peninsula, increasingly are sending adolescent boys and girls to fight and are attacking foreign ships carrying food and other supplies in Sri Lankan waters.

Sri Lanka's complex history and ethnic and religious jigsaw have prevented an easy solution to the conflict

The Sinhalese, who compose about 75 percent of the population and are predominantly Buddhist, call the Tigers terrorists and refuse their demands for an independent Tamil state in the island's north and east, where most Tamils live

Likewise, most Tamils, who make about 20 percent of the island's population and are predominanitly Hindu, call the Tigers freedom fighters. Some Tamils, however, "oppose the LTTE, but do not say so openly," a Batticaloa man said, using the separatist group's imtials. "The Tigers come and extort money, and if you refuse, you are in trouble.

The Tamils, he said, "are caught in the middle. They are detained, tortured, killed by both sides because each thinks they support the other."

Across this land of teeming cities, emerald-green rice paddies, beaches, jungles and dry scrub brush plains, the war has lasted so long that the abnormal has become normal. Gunshots are something to be ducked momentarily before returning to selling produce, fixing bicycles and other routine tasks. Government teachers admmister tests to school children in rebel held territory so they do not fall behind in their studies. The govermment postal service delivers rebel tax notices to houses in Tiger held districts. People discuss the previous day's reported casualties only briefly before turning to other issues such as rice production, tourism's drop-off and cricket, the natonal sport

On a recent night along the road to Batticaloa, five government troops reportedly were killed, and the next day, nervous soldiers prompted by a single gunshot, sprayed bullets wildly on a crowded street A week later, in the same area, 60 Tigers reportedly were killed, yet civilian buses traveled the road the following day with no interruption.

"I had not heard about it, but I would have come anyway," said one passenger. What choice do we have? We have to get where we are going. We have to live."

In Batticaloa district, a rural area dominated by Tamils and rice paddies, life revolves around the rice planting and harvest seasons as it has for centuries. The army controls the town itself, a battered, dusty and impoverished place along a lagoon, as well as the crumbing roads connecting it with outside areas, but it is a fragile control. At night, the soldiers hunker down behind sandbags as the Tigers sporadically attack outlying areas with rifle fire, mortars and rocketpropelled grenades before returning to the jungle at dawn.

In nearby villages, many Tamil civilians - who live in dirt-door shacks without electricity or running water, wear threadbare clothing and ride dilapidated bicycles and ox carts - say they give money, food and other supplies willingly to support the rebels, who are neatly dressed, disciplined and well-fed, and ride expensive motorcycles up and down the dirt roads.

"They ask politely, lovingly, for what we can give," an old woman said. "The rich Tamils do not support the LTTE, but the poor do, and these [Tiger] boys and girls are only trying to get us what is rightfully ours."

One Tamil man said the war had Biblical overtones. "The Sinhalese are like the Egyptians and the Tamils like the Israelites, and our people believe [Tiger leader Velupillai Prabhakaran] is like Moses leading his people from slavery to a promised land," he said. "The only difference is we already know where our promised land is—it is right here."

But some Tamils, even in the heart of Tiger territory, privately say they oppose or are neutral to the rebel force, and many ablebodied men in their twenties and thirties are content to leave the fighting to Tamil teenagers.

"Life was not bad before the war—we had plenty of rice and a nice house," one man said. "All the war has done is cause suffering and wasted money." ■

(Courtesy: Washington Post, Aug. 6 1997)

A woman president and crimes against women!

K.Kanavathipillai

(Former asst. under-secretary of the IBRD)

That a country which has two female heads of state, a mother and daughter combination in fact, is guilty of the most heinous crimes against women is major tragedy of our times. the daughter holds office as president while the mother is the prime minister. The president is the C-in-C of the Sinhala armed forces which now stands accused of human rights violations consisting of large-scale disappearances and sexual abuse of Tamil women.

Sexual harassment inclusive of rape and torture is an instrument of terror employed by invading armies to humiliate, demoralise and overawe the local population. The Indian intruder did just that during his peace-keeping days. The Sinhala armed forces for decades trained and commissioned to kill and destroy Tamil lives and homes, is repeating it.

Military rule has been tightened in the in the north and east. The armed forces are employed to rule ,govern and control the area without the usual constraints of democratic decision making or the acceptance of civil rights. It denotes a complete breakdown of the law and order situation where civilian authority has lost its legitimacy. The U.S. based Committee for Refugees which probed ground conditions in the Jaffna peninsula said that "Jaffna was in practice if not in name under martial law"

.The appointment of Brigadier T.G.Tillakaratne and a committee of nine military officers as the supreme political authority for Jaffna indicates martial law. Similarly brigadier Nihal Jeyakody finds appointment as the co-ordinating authority for the Trincomallee district. In Batticaloa and Vallaichchenai districts two different brigadiers have been appointed for the same purpose.

The Tamils and Sinhalese differ from each other ethnically, culturally, linguistically and in matters of topography and economy. The imposition of foreign military rule gives rise to the inference that Tamils are of an inferior status that the occupation forces have a right of stay on Tamil territory by virtue of conquest.

Twenty-two members of the elite police commando Special Task Force (STF) were accused of the abduction and killing of 21 Tamil youths whose bodies were later found floating in the Bolgoda, Alawwa and Diyawanna lakes. Judical action was taken against them only after heavy pressure from the diplomatic representatives from the European donor countries whose liberal donations are actively financing the war against the Tamils.

The cases had been recently taken off the roll of the Colombo Chief Magistrate's court due to the failure of the Attorney General or his representative to attend court on several consecutive dates. The 22 STF officers are now serving in the Tamil areas. This is an instance of the collusion between the judical structure and the Sinhala armed forces.

The 1996 US State Department human rights report noted an alarming increase of disappearances at the hands of the security forces especially in the north-east and Colombo , "of particular concern are the unsolved disappearance of 700 persons in Jaffna". This is only the tip of the iceberg. The actual figures are much more and steadily increasing.

The UN human rights commission accuses the Sri Lankan government of making slow progress in prosecuting security forces implicated in human rights abuses. For slow progress you can safely read non-start. Sri Lanka has the distinction of having not prosecuted and sentenced a single soldier or policeman for offences against the Tamil people.

The Jaffna Mothers Union (Annaiyar Munnani) took up the case of the disappeared and wrote to the president asking for an appointment to present their case in person. When no reply was received they threatened to take 'direct action' . The martial law administrator sent them a warning and the mothers have lapsed into the silence of the grave.

Sexual abuse and harassment of women is a burning issue in the conquered territory as well as in Colombo. The forces go to extreme lengths to hide their misdeeds. Krishanti was raped, strangled and buried. Her mother, brother and a neighbour who went to the army camp to inquire after the missing girl were killed and buried. Rajani of Kondavil was raped, killed and buried in a lavatory pit. How many more lie buried in our soil only time can tell.

The ugliest aspect of this sordid scenario is that the policeman is as bad or worse than the army man. On the 18 th May 1997 a posse of Valaichchenai policemen broke into a Tamil home by night and raped Koneswary, the mother of 4 children. To erase the evidence of rape they blasted a grenade in her crotch and split her apart.

Due to the outcry here and abroad the government has appointed an asst.superintendant of police to inquire into the matter and file a report. The offenders are at large. People living in the neighbourhood have been threatened with dire consequences were they to give statements to the inquirer or to the press. The talk is Koneswary's death is about to be explained off as the victim of a crossfire.

The STF is conducting a virtual reign of terror against the women of the Batticaloa and Valaichchenai districts. Complains are minimal due to the fear of reprisals, when the police man is the offender who is to record the complaint and act against the accused? The Jaffna situation is identical. Complaints are not taken seriously. Complainants are assaulted or inveigled some charge or other and punished.

Two typical cases have been reported from Jaffna in July 1997. On the 12 th, 17 year old Vishalini of Araly-South, student of Saraswathy Vidyasalai was raped by two soldiers when she was on her way to school. On the 14th, 22 year old E.Sasikala of Karanavai school-teacher, was gang raped by soldiers of the Vallai check post when she was returning home from work. Due to the ever increasing number of these offences the military government has appointed a retired army officer to make inquires and file a report. How nice the response.

In Colombo, army and police units break into Tamil homes by night and take the women inmates, clad in their night clothes, to the police stations. They are kept there till a large sum of money is paid as ransom. If no payment is made, she is taken before a magistrate who sends her to a remand jail without any inquiry. The number of Tamils languishing in Colombo jails for upward of two years is in the region of thousands.

The garrulous minister of justice is preparing to open a special court to prosecute Tamils arrested under the emergency regulations and the prevention of terrorism act. The latter is a scandalous piece of legislation condemned upon by the entire free world.

The sexual harassment of Tamil women is in essence state policy enforced by the Sinhala armed forces, of three leaders of state who are responsible for the sad plight of Tamil women, two are still at the top. We owe to this family, our strong urge to be free and establish our own independent state. ■

Why did the President yell at the Ministers ?

The President of Sri Lanka Mrs.Chandrika Kumaratunga has been yelling recently. And that too at Cabinet Ministers. Why ?

The AFP, Colombo reported on August 20 : "Kumaratunga told state radio and television on Tuesday night that she was disturbed by reports that corrupt policemen were demanding bribes to release those (Tamils) taken into custody.

"I was furious when I heard about this", she said, "Some policemen are doing this to discredit the government while there are those who are trying to get rich quick"

Kumaratunga said there had been instances when 25,000 to 30,000 rupees (416 dollars to 500 dollars) was demanded from the (Tamil) families of those taken into custody on suspicion.

"When I heard this I went and yelled at everybody in cabinet, not that any minister is responsible. But I was very angry. We will not allow this ....."

HOT SPRING notes that AFP did not report of any yelling on the part of the President when she heard of Tamil Krishanthis and Rajanis and Koneswarys being gang raped and killed.

Life in the Northeast - August Diary

Corpses on the roadside

Over 100 Tamil civilians have been killed in recent times while inspecting their former homes in army-captured parts of Kilinochchi (Uruthirapuram, Selvanakar and Parathipuram). Innocent trips to recover valuables have ended up as ordeals where people have been attacked by knife-wielding Sinhala soldiers who spare no one, or else shoot people dead on sight. Many of the Tamil victims have been later found by worried relatives who often discover the mutilated bodies of their loved ones lying on the roadside. Parts of these areas in Kilinochchi are littered with corpses and skeletons. Many more Tamil civilians have gone missing at the hands of these troops, where they are presumed dead or facing torture.

Young mother hit by shell

A 22-year old Tamil mother has been killed by Sri Lankan artillery fire from Omanthai. Sothilingam Kalaichelvi was killed on August 2 when she was hit directly by Sri Lanka's deliberate shelling of nearby Vanni areas. Her body was completely torn apart. Mrs. Kalaichelvi was a displaced person from Punnalaikadduvan (Jaffna) who was taking refuge in Vanni. She leaves behind two small children.

Army raids on food stocks

Sri Lanka's military forces in Jaffna-isolated from troops in the rest of the island-are raiding Tamil civilian food stocks and taking the food back to their military camps. The Sinhala troops' main targets are multi-purpose co-operatives and warehouses where stocks are largest. Armed soldiers enter premises, grab large quantities of food and leave, leaving stores virtually empty. The price of food in Jaffna has subsequently shot up sky-high. A kilo of rice sells at 95 rupees, and a bottle of kerosene at 100 rupees. Now that the army is trapped in the peninsula without a sea-supply route it has turned its attention to civilian food stocks.

Appeal goes to Geneva

The Consortium of Peoples Organisations (Kilinochchi) has posted to Geneva-based human rights organisations a comprehensive report bearing evidence of gross violations of human rights enacted against Tamils by the ethnically-Sinhalese Sri Lankan military. The report points out that 98 Tamil civilians have been killed by the Sinhala military in the Pooneryn administrative division in the past year. In the same period, 14 civilians have been killed and 28 badly injured in Kandawalai; 6 have been killed and 10 injured in Karachchi. Moreover, 73 innocent people have been arrested in Kilinochchi by Sinhala armed forces over this same period. Their whereabouts are still not known. The Consortiumsolicits the help of human rights organisations to trace their whereabouts.

Indimidation by army men

Relatives of Krishanti Kumaraswamy living in Thenmaradchy (in Jaffna peninsula) are facing death-threats and intimidation from Sri Lanka's armed forces occupying Jaffna. Krishanti-who was from Thenmaradchy-was gang-raped and murdered by Sinhalese troops and her immediate family were also killed when they went to enquire about her disappearance. Every night Sinhalese troops now gather around the residences of Krishanti's relatives and fire repeated gunshots to terrorise them. The army's high command is aware of this. It has not taken any remedial action.

Students are rounded up

Sri Lanka's military occupying Jaffna has ordered heads of schools to inform on any children who go absent from school for three days. Head teachers must also report to the military whenever a new student enrols in the school. In spite of these new regulations Jaffna students are still - in vast numbers - being rounded up and arrested in army "search" operations. Many are also taken away to military camps for "special interrogation".

Pregnant woman dies during curfew

A pregnant Tamil woman in urgent need of medical care died last week unable to leave her Jaffna house and go to hospital during army curfew hours. Kanakaratnam Satheesvary (36) of Thanmaradchy - who was in an advanced stage of pregnancy - was undergoing premature labour pains but the 4pm-6am curfew forced her to remain in the house, where she died from lack of medical attention.

Tough talk by army officer

A senior Sinhalese military officer has told a meeting of Tamil headmasters and teachers in occupied Jaffna that he is ready to close down "any or all" of Jaffna's schools if teachers ignore his tough new directives. Warning that "disobedience would not be tolerated" he gave out the military´s new instructions-"due homage must be

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paid to the Sri Lankan lion flag, and the Sinhalese national anthem must be sung daily in classrooms by both students and teachers." He added that Tamil teachers and students must bare their heads in respect when passing Sinhalese military camps or sentry points and that registers of student attendance must be submitted by hand to the nearest military camp for their perusal; students absent for three days must be reported to military officials; no school functions can take place without permission from the military or without military officials as guests to "grace the occasion". If these orders are not followed, he said, "punishment will be drastic, and will be an example to others." The officer ended his speech by asking his audience to go home and think about these points very carefully.

No rations for 100,000

Sri Lanka's government agent for Kilinochchi has stated that over 100,000 displaced Tamil civilians are without food rations. Mr. Thillainadarasa said he was aggrieved that neither the government nor NGOs seemed to be concerned about the fate of the displaced people living in his area.

Sinhala soldier beaten to death

A Sinhala soldier guarding a grocery store in Jaffna has been beaten to death by the newly-appointed Sinhalese management, who are friends and relatives of senior army officials. The lowly soldier was on guard duty outside the Stanley Road "Salu Sala" shop when the sun became too hot for him and he asked permission to stand inside. The Sinhala management-who were appointed by senior Sinhalese military officials-refused the soldier´s request and chased him back outside whereupon the enraged soldier flung a grenade inside the shop. Six of the management were injured in the blast and had to be taken to Anuradhapura for treatment. The soldier was beaten to death by the rest of the shop workers.

"Sinhalisation" plan by govt.

Former minister of national security Mr. Athulathmudali had a 3-pronged strategy to decimate Tamils: he wanted the Sinhala military to take control of the Vavuniya-Jaffna road; to create a vast Sinhala colony extending from Anuradhapura to the Mullaitivu coast (to bifurcate the north/east); and to snatch away the fishing rights of Tamils in the north/east. This sinister design is being actively followed through by the Chandrika government today. We have seen, respectively, the Jaya Sikurui operation (to capture the highway), the announcement of Manal Aru as a separate district (bifurcation of the homeland) and the successive bans on Tamil fishing. The re-naming of Tamil villages with Sinhalese names is part and parcel of these plans. Jaffna was renamed "Yapa Patuna", and Parayanalam kulam renamed as Sapumalpura. This week, the Vavuniya village of Neriyakulam has got a new Sinhala name, Gayasingapura, with the tacit approval of the MP for the area.

Demolition of houses in Jaffna

68 Tamil families who returned to Selvanayakapuram (Atchuvely, Jaffna) have found their houses gone. 108 houses in the town have been demolished by the Sinhala army in order to erect militarybunds. In the whole of Jaffna the number of houses demolished for the same purpose is 70,000.

Five civilians missing

Five Tamil civilians who went to inspect their former homes in Murasumoddai (Kilinochchi) have been missing for the past week. Paramu Vasanthakumar (22), Jeyam (25), Velan Aiyathurai (40), Rathinam Satkunanathan (32) and Thambirasa Thayaparan (25) went to recover valuables left behind when the Sinhala army invaded parts of Kilinochchi last year. Relatives who went to search for these five people say they found their bicycles and remnants of their clothes.They are not sure whether the victims have been taken alive or killed and buried.

Kfirs target civilians

Military planes are attacking Tamil civilians miles away from specified areas of military operations, falsifying the Sinhalese government's claim that its bombers are being used only at the war-front. In truth, warplanes are striking Tamil areas far away from the war-front, proving that the government's objective is to terrorise, maim and kill Tamil civilians. This has been the case for the entire span of the Tamil-Sinhala conflict but the government's efforts have intensified recently.

253 families driven out

Some 253 Tamil families, including children, have been driven by the Sinhalese military from their homes in Navalady junction (Batticaloa, on the Colombo to Batticaloa road). They are now homeless in the Oddumavaddy area. All the 253 families are without relief rations or proper shelter.

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No trace of an entire family

The entire Kandasamy family-who recently returned to their home in Mirusuvil (Thenmaradchy, Jaffna) from the Vanni-has disappeared, abducted by the Sinhalese military or Tamil mercenaries in the peninsula. Mr. Kandasamy, his wife, his 18-year old daughter and 16-year old son are all missing. Their next of kin were told by dismissive army officials of the nearby Sinhala army camp that one of

the Tamil groups working for the Sinhala army may have abducted the family. The Sinhalese military officers are not taking the relatives enquiries any further.

Model market now a disgrace

Jaffna´s model market - once the pride of the Tamil people there - has fallen into disgrace since the occupation of Jaffna by the Sinhalese military. The Sinhala forces have designated the upstairs area of the market as a huge toilet facility, ruining what was once a well-maintained and attractive site. Under the former UNP government -when the late Lalith Athulathmudali was minister for national security - one wing of the market building was deliberately flattened by a Sri Lankan airforce bomber. The rest of the building survived and functioned well during the LTTE´s administration of Jaffna. But under Sinhala army occupation the building has become a virtual wreck.

Church bombed: Nine killed, 15 wounded

Two Sri Lankan Kfir bombers today at 9 AM bombed a Catholic Church in Vavunikulam (Vanni) on 15 August killing 9 innocent Tamil civilians and critically wounding 15 more. The victims were among several hundred displaced Tamil refugees taking shelter in the church after being made homeless from government´s 3 month long military operation Jeya Sikuru. Six of the dead have so far been identified but the remaining three bodies´ reduced to bones and flesh´ were too badly disfigured to recognise. The attack was similar to one carried out by Sri Lankan forces in 1995 when war planes deliberately killed scores of Tamils who the military asked to gather in Navaly church for safety. Five children were among these killed or injured.Jaffna town under siege

Student journal released

The latest issue of the political/scientific journal for students - "Nembu" (in English "Lever") - is now on sale. The journal devotes itself to advancing political and scientific study among the student population. It also carries insightful articles on history, medicine and psychology.

Jaffna town under seige

Sinhalese troops occupying Tamil-inhabited Jaffna city have besieged the place, with "no-go security zones" declared at almost all points of the city. Its entire coastal area is out of bounds to ordinary citizens. Navanturai (in the west), Columbuthurai (in the east) and Gurunagar (in the north) are also security zones. The Gnanams hotel in the city centre is occupied by the martial law administrator and his committee of nine military officers. The no-go rule is strictly enforced here. Many roads in Ariyalai have been closed to the public. On the southern edge, new army checkpoints have been erected on Wyman road, Arasady junction, Temple road and Sankiliyan junction. Any person travelling from Jaffna town to Nallur would have to pass six Sri Lankan military checkpoints. At each, he is obliged to dismount from his vehicle, remove any headgear and submit to Sinhala soldiers documents of identity and residential permits.

Kfir bombing daily

Sri Lankan Kfir jets have been systematically pounding residential areas in Mullaitivu since early August. The pilots of these Kfir planes-both Sinhalese pilots and East European mercenaries display utter callousness during these bombing missions striking at civilian dwellings, public buildings, vegetation and livestock.

His blood was drained out

A 26-year old Tamil has died after the Sinhalese army forcibly drained him of blood to give it to wounded soldiers. Periathamby Kukathasan from Palampasi Nedunkerni was brought by Sri Lankan soldiers to Vavuniya,s army camp after being tortured by them. But arriving in Vavuniya, instead of being treated for his injuries, military doctors extracted huge amounts of the man's blood from his body for use by Sinhala soldiers wounded in Jaya Sikurui battles. Kukathasan died from the ordeal while in Vavuniya hospital.

Forced labo[illegible] for Tamils

The Sri Lankan army based at Kommathurai and Kumpurumoolai camps (in Batticaloa) are forcing ordinary Tamil residents to build extensive protective fortifications and defence lines for the Sinhalese troops. Local Tamil civilians are being brought into

Life in the Northeast - August Diary

the camps and held inside sometimes for a week at a time where they are made to cut trenches and erect earthworks for the army's defence. Tamils who own tractors have also been ordered to work for the Sinhalese soldiers free of charge

Military honours

Crowds gathered in Periapandivirichchan Kulam,s burial grounds on 22 august to see full military honours given to two LTTE fighters killed recently in battle with the Sinhala army. The burials took place at the end of a long procession in which with the bodies of the dead fighters were carried to musical accompaniment played by the local student orchestra. Most of the people were from Mannar Madhu who wanted to pay their respects to the women, Supiramaniam Amirtha Ranjini (22) of Thatchanana Maruthamadu (Mannar) and Vadivel Thevy of Chettikulam (Vavuniya) who died in Puliyankulam.

Students relocated

The LTTE administration has relocated students of Puliyankulam Hindu college to Vavunikulam Sivapuram GTM school. The Hindu college building has been razed to the ground by Sri Lankan bombs dropped by its Kfir planes during the second week of this month.

Two farmers shot dead

Two Tamil farmers who went to water their plants early in the morning in Kaithady (Thenmaradchy, Jaffna) were shot dead by occupying Sinhalese soldiers as they fled in fear from an approaching army patrol. The farmers - like most Tamils in Jaffna - were scared of being taken away to army camps and tortured or killed, and therefore chose to leave before the army patrol reached them. But the soldiers wasted no time opening fire on the men, killing both instantly. One of the dead has been identified as Mailavaganam Thavapalan (37) of Kaithady north. Sri Lankan troops in army-occupied Tamil areas like Jaffna operate a shoot-to-kill policy against Tamils. Soldiers are not held accountable for their actions.

No lying about casualties

A LTTE press release issued on 25 August says:-

"The LTTE wishes to place on record its commitment to the truth in the matter of declaring the actual number of its fallen martyrs. This policy the LTTE has strictly followed since the first day it took up arms for the restoration of the lost rights of the Tamil nation. A deliberate reduction of the number of our fallen martyrs would be an insult to their memory and the cause they stand for. The LTTE will not for any reason whatsoever falsify figures pertaining to its dead".

The LTTE reiterates that the total number of its dead in the 5 days of battle for Puliyankulam - between 19 August to 23 August - is 76 (seventy-six). The LTTE asserts that drastically reducing the numbers regarding dead soldiers, refusing to accept their dead bodies and taking refuge behind such patently false devices like "missing in action" is the stock in trade of the Sinhala military, which is notorious for denigrating its dead."

Families left destitute

Although Sri Lankan law provides for the compensation of victims of military atrocities, the present Chandrika government has shown no inclination to compensate the enormous number of Tamils in Jaffna who have fallen victim to Sri Lankan army excesses. Some Tamil families have become destitute after Sinhalese forces have killed their main breadwinners, either by bullets, artillery shells or airforce bombs, but no action has been taken by the government to ease their burdens in the areas it is occupying.

Youths chained and beaten

Twenty Tamil youths playing volleyball in Thottilady (Chankanai, Jaffna) were arbitrarily rounded up by Sinhalese troops occupying this area. The young men were chained together and dragged to the local military camp where soldiers beat them senseless. The reason for this punishment is not known. On appeals made by the young men's parents, 14 were released. But the remaining six are still held in the military camp. The parents of these 6 fear the worst.

Bomber victim dies

A Tamil lady, Mrs. Kunasingam Sarojadevi (35), who was critically injured by a Sri Lankan Kfir bombing raid last week has died in hospital, five days after the incident. She was a resident of Puthuvilankulam, a residential Tamil area which was subject to numerous bombing raids this month.

The LTTE and Tamils: What are governments up to?

The action group of Tamils in the U.S. (AGOTUS) in a statement issued recently says:

In the US, the State Department is toying with the idea of placing the LTTE on a list of 'terrorist organizations.' India has not only banned the LTTE on its soil, but actively harasses LTTE supporters. These are significant moves by different governments, and cannot be considered as isolated or low profile actions. It is believed that enormous efforts have gone into these, and decisions have come down from the highest levels.

While taking such vigorous actions against the LTTE, these governments have also called for a 'negotiated settlement' to the conflict. Indeed, many have offered publicly, to facilitate and even mediate such negotiations. This seemingly paradoxical stance of these governments - on the one hand promoting a negotiated settlement, while on the other, actively trying to crush one of the parties to the conflict - may be accounted for in a variety of ways.

Let us look at each of these possibilities.

One possible explanation is that, these governments don't have a good grasp of the problem and don't see this contradiction. One arm of the government is concerned about the so-called 'terrorist' aspect of the problem, while the other is genuinely interested in a resolution with peace and justice for all. It is as simple as, the right hand not knowing what the left is doing. Governments do act in this manner, as we have seen even here in the US and elsewhere. Considering the high profile nature of these actions, however, this seems unlikely.

Another supposition is that these governments want the two parties, i.e. the Sri Lanka government and the LTTE, to enter into talks. According to this theory, the LTTE is being badgered merely to nudge them towards the negotiating table. The Sri Lanka government is also being nudged, but in this case 'quiet diplomacy' is being used instead of 'open coercion.' The problem with this theory is that, it is the LTTE that wants to negotiate and doesn't need any nudging, and the Sri Lankan government is the party that is refusing to negotiate.

A third and a more plausible explanation is that these governments are truly trying to bring about a resolution, but without the LTTE. It is hoped by these governments that the so called 'devolution package' proposed by the government, and the relative acquiescence of the 'other Tamil parties', are conducive to an easy settlement. The only obstacle is the LTTE, and therefore every assistance must be provided to the Sri Lanka government, to not just merely weaken, but totally annihilate the LTTE. Once this is accomplished, the Sri Lanka government and the 'other Tamil parties' can conclude the matter to everybody's satisfaction. This is the most plausible explanation for the seemingly paradoxical actions of these governments.

> *" In the case of disappearances, Sri Lanka ranks second to Iraq. In these case of rape by government armed forces, Sri Lanka is number one"*

This logic also explains a number of definitive actions by these governments. In addition to harassing the LTTE on their own soils, they are also providing, both material and moral, assistance to the Sri Lanka government to fight the LTTE. The US is providing military assistance to the Sri Lankan army, in material and training, while blithely maintaining that such assistance is 'non-lethal.' Britain sells arms to Sri Lanka, without even bothering to make such distinctions. India too assists the Sri Lankan army in a multitude of ways, such as joint patrols with the Sri Lankan navy, logistical support, etc. There are rumors of much greater (clandestine) assistance as well.

This is also why one of the worst human rights records anywhere in the world has not evoked befitting condemnation or action by these governments. In the case of disappearances, Sri Lanka ranks second only to Iraq for the last ten years. In the case of rape by government armed forces, Sri Lanka is number one. The density of destruction with the use of sophisticated weaponry, aerial bombardment, artillery shelling, etc. is unparalleled.

Half the Tamil population is displaced and forced to live in refugee camps; the bulk of their infrastructure is destroyed; and the entire population is subject to an inhuman embargo on food and medicine. Even the voluntary NGOs are blocked from providing assistance to the beleaguered civilian population. All under a rigid press censorship! But, in the view of these governments, it is necessary to overlook these for the 'greater good' that is to come. On the whole, this appears to be a well thought out strategy, uniformly and collectively adopted by a number of governments.

The question is, will this strategy,

that has been in place now for nearly two years, really work? It is vital to know the answer, and know it early, because if it is likely to produce the desired results everyone should support it, and if not, it must be changed. It is inhuman to let this tragedy, with all its attendant human suffering, to continue.

Half a million people left their homes to be with the LTTE in 1995 . . . to say that 500,000 people left because the LTTE had their guns pointed at them is patently ridiculous

Before one delves into the prospects of this strategy succeeding, it is necessary to look at the reasons for these countries adopting this approach. Most conflict situations look different from different angles, and the eye of the beholder largely influences the view. What is important to the parties in conflict, is not necessarily the most significant to the outsider, especially when the outsider is also affected by it. These countries are affected by the conflict in Sri Lanka in more ways than one. They have had to take in the fleeing refugees - feed them, house them and educate the children, etc. at considerable cost. We at the AGOTUS are mindful of, and are indeed grateful for, the mostly responsible and the humane way in which these countries have treated the Tamil refugees. India especially has borne the brunt of this disaster. India has also had to deal with the political fall out in their own soil, with its large Tamil constituency and other secessionist movements, such as in Punjab and Kashmir.

The upshot of all this is that, the solutions these countries support are materially influenced by their own difficulties with the problem. What is good for the parties to the conflict, or even what is just, right and moral, has become secondary. They want a quick resolution and normalcy restored in Sri Lanka, so that they could return the refugees, and they see this strategy of a political solution between the Sri Lanka government and the 'other Tamil parties' (i.e. excluding the LTTE), as viable and desirable.

This takes us back to the question - will this strategy really work, or is it going to lead to prolongation of the war and more bloodshed? The conflict is a complex one, and therefore the manifold aspects of this problem need to be looked at.

Firstly, one needs to look at the question of whether the LTTE can be defeated militarily? This is important, because if the answer is in the negative, this strategy is sure to fail. Experience thus far, has shown that Sri Lankan army actions (the increase in the ferocity of which has been exponential) has not only failed to break the LTTE, but the LTTE today, is actually stronger than ever before. There are several reasons for this (such as the widespread Tamil support), the most important of which is the fact that, it is a national liberation movement, "fighting for independence within the territory of its own homelands." Such movements have never been defeated anywhere in the world, and from all available evidence there is no reason to believe that the LTTE will be an exception.

The vast majority of Tamil people support the LTTE. They may not agree with everything that the LTTE does, but the overwhelming support for the LTTE is real. There is ample evidence to back-up this assertion. Half a million people leaving their homes to be with the LTTE (1995), in spite of the real danger of revenge attacks by the Sri Lankan army for doing so, is no small matter. It has been said that they did so out of fear of the LTTE, but to say that five hundred thousand people left their homes because LTTE had their guns pointed at them is patently ridiculous.

The conduct of the Tamil Diaspora is another piece of evidence. They congregate in the tens of thousands in the capital cities all over the world to show their support for the LTTE. Every year during the last ten, there have been demonstrations and mass rallies in London, Toronto, Paris, New York, Geneva, etc. the latest being in Geneva during the UNHRC hearings on human rights (17 March 1997). Over 10,000 Tamils assembled at this event. One has not seen the 'other Tamil parties' being able to gather even a hundred supporters to show similar strength.

It is noteworthy that this fact is not lost on these foreign governments. Efforts are afoot to 'create an alternate leadership' for the Tamil people. Western governments are repeatedly telling expatriate activists that 'their association with the LTTE is hurting their cause'. Sri Lanka government tried to woo Tamil expatriates all over the world a few years back to wean them away from the LTTE, and gave up. India too tried to prop up Varatharaja Perumal, who had no popular support among the Tamils, as the chosen leader for the Tamils. Perumal, by the way, now lives in exile in India under armed protection. At present, Douglas Devananda is being taken on tours in India and in some western countries. This absurd situation of someone else trying to choose a leader for the Tamil people is an affront, that no self-respecting Tamil can or will tolerate.

It has also been said that the Tamils in south Sri Lanka don't support the LTTE. This again is patently ridiculous reasoning. When a mere suspicion of being an LTTE supporter could land one in jail, or worse, cause that person to disappear, one must be really stupid or suicidal to live in the south and openly express support for the LTTE.

From the point of view of the countries affected by the refugee problem, the support the LTTE enjoys among the Tamil people everywhere must be viewed as a positive one. The number of refugees created by any acts of the LTTE is minuscule compared to the number due to the actions of the Sri Lanka government and its army. The number of asylum seekers was least when the LTTE administered the north, and most of those who left during this period did so mainly to escape the harshness of the embargo and the aerial bombardment and shelling. The huge increase in the numbers now attempting to flee to other countries (and forcibly prevented by the army) since the Sri Lanka army took over the hitherto LTTE controlled areas, is adequate evidence of the Tamil preference.

The popular support for the LTTE is real, and as long as this lasts, the LTTE cannot be militarily defeated. But, let us for the sake of discussion assume that the LTTE can be crushed and annihilated. Will the 'other Tamil parties' be able to amicably resolve the underlying cause of this conflict with the Sinhala leaders? The Tamil party TULF (and its predecessor FP) tried for forty years to reason with the Sinhala leadership and came up with naught. The octogenarian leader of the TULF (Mr. M. Sivasithamparam) himself, has stated only recently that 'if not for the LTTE there wouldn't be a devolution package.' Even with the pressure exerted by the LTTE presence, the Sri Lanka government has been unable (or unwilling) to come up with a minimum package that the vast majority of the Tamils could accept. What will it be if there is no LTTE?

The reason for this state of affairs is that the Sri Lanka government (Sinhala leadership) is not convinced that federalism is the best form of government for a multi-ethnic country like Sri Lanka. They would rather have a monolithic unitary state with all the powers concentrated at the center (i.e. Sinhala Buddhist majority), and are willing to consider federalism only under duress. Thus the attempt to get away with the minimum. The overriding consideration is not what is good for the country to function smoothly, but what is good for the 'majority race.'

The governments that are coercing Tamils to accept the 'package' are well advised to study the 'package'. It is no exaggeration to state that this is a document that will entrench the Sinhala-Buddhist hegemony in that island, and enslave the Tamil people forever. The characterization by a few, especially the Sri Lankan media, that it is the 'boldest move ever', and 'it is federalism except in name', etc., doesn't make it so. A comparative study against constitutions that have stood the test of time, such as that of the United States of America and Switzerland, and even the newest South African one will demonstrate the hollowness of this claim.

These governments should also study the history of what became of the earlier agreements (B-C Pact, Senanayake-Chelvanayakam Pact, etc.), and the parliamentary acts (DCC Act, XIII Amendment, etc.), that were assumed to resolve the conflict. One of the prime reasons for the failure of these efforts, it must be realized, was lack of implementation. It should be clear to anyone that an essential prerequisite for success this time around is a 'guarantee of implementation', and this so-called 'package' has none.

Under this scenario, the strategy adopted by these governments is sure to fail, as it has so far. It is quite obvious that both elements of the strategy, i.e. exclusion of the LTTE, and encouragement of the Sri Lanka government and the 'other Tamil parties' to resolve the conflict, have not only failed so far, but have actually helped escalate the human suffering. There is an urgent need for the international community to rethink the matter.

The British initiative may be considered as a beginning, and we at the AGOTUS are particularly encouraged by inclusion of the possibility of the 'talks with the LTTE', in the British sponsored accord signed by the two Sinhala parties. This could be an indication that the policy of excluding the LTTE may be under review, and if this is so, given the facts presented in this paper, it is a move in the right direction.

The level of human suffering in Sri Lanka is intense and given the inability of the Sri Lankans to resolve it, greater international involvement is needed.

As a first step, the strategy of no holds barred support for the war effort by Sri Lanka must be abandoned. The war has resulted only in the escalation of human rights violations, death and destruction, and has not moved anything closer to resolution of the conflict. Steps must be taken to bring the LTTE into the mainstream. Sri Lanka government has a vested interest in depicting the LTTE as a terrorist organization. Western governments' passive acquiescence to this has resulted in isolation of an important party to the conflict, and a negative impact on the prospects for peace. Steps must be taken to decrease the human rights violations. Items that need urgent attention are the news censorship and the embargo. The US State department's human rights report is a step in the right direction. Other steps such as facilitation of access to international media and the international human rights organizations, etc. must be taken. As pointed out by numerous NGOs at the UNHRC hearings in Geneva this year, the presence of troops in the civilian areas is the prime cause of the human rights violations - large-scale disappearances, rapes and harassment. The Sri Lanka government must be pressured to restore indigenous civilian administration and withdraw the troops from civilian areas. Urgent and concrete steps must be taken to initiate a dialogue between the Sri Lanka government and the LTTE. The international community must not only use the leverage it has with both parties to bring this about, but should actively assist in modalities, establishing ground rules, etc., to ensure success. ■

“Sri Lankan repression was helped by 18 years of arms, and aid by former Tory govt.” - LIBERATION

The follwing motion on Tamil Rights submitted by the Tamil Action Committee was passed unanimously at the Annual General Meeting of LIBERATIONheld recently.

Liberation, having exposed in a statement at the 53rd Human Rights Commission Conference held in Geneva in April 1997, the inhumanities which are still continuing to be perpetrated in Sri Lanka resulting in over a million Tamils becomnng internally displaced and exposed to inhuman conditions by the occupying Sri Lankan armed forces, who are also in charge of distributing food and other necessities.

(i) Are gravely concerned at the continuing acts of ethnic cleansing of the Tamils of the north-east; rape, extra judicial killings, murders and over 700 disappearances in 1996 and 1997, and an unknown number of Tamils languishing in secret detention in the capital city of Colombo, where organisations, in particular, trade unions, press, lawyers, Tamil groups, politicians and the church leaders have failed to draw attention to the international forums or Embassies in Colombo. This silence has distanced the humanitarian awareness of the international community towards the Sinhalese abhorrent policy of Tamil ethnic cleansing

(ii) We note the political instability in Sri Lanka and the absence of a singular attempt to bring about a dialogue between the Chandrika Kumaratunga regime and Vellupillai Prabaharan, the Leader of Liberation Tigers of Tamil Ealam (LTTE) towards a ceasefire and a negotiated settlement with the help of an acceptable third party. Whilst the President's on going "war for peace, is killing innocent people, and continues to emphasise the instability of Sri Lanka, it is only providing the Tamil homelands as a breeding ground for new emergencies under the Prevention of Terrorism Act and resulting in further ethnic cleansing of Tamils,

(iii) We are deeply alarmed at the situation facing the victims of rape in armed conflicts in the Tamil northeast homelands and that the use of rape as a weapon of war constitutes a war crime and an act of genocide as defined in the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. We call upon the President of Sri Lanka Chandrika Kumaratunga to take adequate measures for the protection of women and children from such acts and to strengthen mechanisms to investigate and punish all those responsible and bring the perpetrators to justice.

(iv) We urge the newly elected Government, as committed by the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, Robin Cook MP, in his mission statement on "an ethical dimension and support for the demands of other peoples for the democratic rights on which we insist for ourselves", to take cognisance of the fact that Sri Lanka's internal repression, externally supported, including 18 years of arms, military training and aid, by former Tory government and gross violation of human rights has eroded democracy giving way to autocratic rule by President, and that it was colonial Britain that left the Tamil people at the mercy of the majority Sinhalese, when they left in 1948,

(v) We urge that for democracy and peace to grow in Tamil homelands, the Foreign Secretary initiates a General Framework Agreement with the Sri Lankan President, the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Ealam towards a legaly constituted cease fire amd a negotiated settlement so that both races can live, as had lived during the pre-colonial days, in peaceful coexistence. Till such time the Tamils who have taken refuge, who are dispossessed and uprooted from their homes should receive humanitarian considerations and be given leave to stay and not be deported from the United Kingdom.

- News Briefs -

Fish in plenty

There is an abundance of fishing resources in Jaffna's northern waters, due to limited fishing activity for over a decade, consequent to the ongoing war.

Before 1983,over 40 percent of Colombo's fish requirements went from Jaffna. Before the war, Jaffna had 12 ice plants and three processing plants. There are no cold storage facilities in Jaffna now.

Army salaries stolen

A portion of the July salary of the employees of the Palaly army hospital amounting to Rs.2 lakhs and 19 thousand is reported to have been stolen. Two persons have been taken into custody and were produced before Jaffna magistrate A.N.Ramachandran.

(Sunday Observer, Aug.10)

Lanka's new envoys

Dr.Warnasena Rasaputram, currently Sri Lanka's High Commissioner in Malaysia, has been appointed ambassador to U.S.A. One-time Governor of the Central Bank, he was also the country's ambassador in France, and the U.N.in Geneva.

Rodney Vandergert, Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, has been appointed ambassador to the People's Republic of China. He had earlier served as ambassador to the Soviet Union and as High Commissioner in Canada.

Bank clerk found dead

A People's Bank clerk, Somasundaram Surendran (43) was found dead in a room at the People's Bank office, Trincomalee on August 3. Surendran who was transferred from Trinco to Vavuniya had later managed to get a transfer to Jaffna beginning August 1. It was while he was waiting to proceed by ship to Jaffna that he was found dead. His wife is reported to be an employee at the Bank of Ceylon, Jaffna.

"Sinhala Sea Tiger" ?

A youth found swimming in the sea off Colombo caused a scare that he was a Sea Tiger, and was arrested by the Sri Lankan navy. On being arrested it was realised that he was a Sinhala youth who had fallen off a boat. Neverthless, he was handed over to the Harbour police for further investigation

Emergency extended

The bill to extend the state of emergency was passed in the Sri Lankan parliament on August 7 by a majority of 30 votes. 107 voted for, with 77 opposing. The T.U.L.F voted against the motion, while the E.P.D.P. and the C.W.C. voted with the government.

Girl's mystery death

Mystery surrounds the death by severe burn injuries, of a 13year old Tamil girl, a student of Kathiresan Maha Vidyalaya, Nawalapitiya. The girl was boarded in a house by her father after the girl's mother had left for employment in the Gulf. While the boarding mistress who admitted her to hospital claimed that she had set herself on fire after pouring kerosene oil on herself, doctors who battled to save her life suspect that it was a case of homicide. The mystery behind her death deepened when the post-mortem revealed that she had been raped.

Trinco man in custody

Chelliah Pathmanathan, alias Eelathunathan (53) was taken into custody by the Trincomalee police, on a charge of witholding information on his relative , believed to be the LTTE's Trinco military wing leader. "The information that we have got is that his brother-in-law Joseph Anthony Daas alias Swarnam was in the habit of visiting the suspect's house which is situated in the heart of the city", police said. Eelathunathan has however denied the charge.

School heads arrested

Three school administrators in Jaffna, have been arrested by the army , on suspicion that they had given help to injured LTTE fighters, and had encouraged students to help them. The three school heads are Vice-Principal of Hartley College Gunascclan, Point Pedro's Siththivinayagar School head Kanthasamy and head of Puloly Methodist Mission School S.Ragunathan. A fourth person arrested on similar suspicion was Co-operative inspector Kanthasamy of Karaveddy.

Jaffna Hindu Principal

Mr.A.Sivakumaran has been appointed Principal of Jaffna Hindu College. An appointee from the Sri Lanka Principals Service Grade 1, he was Principal of Alaveddy Arunodhya College prior to this appointment. Mr.Sivakumaran is also an old student of Jaffna Hindu.

U.S aid for Jaffna Technical college

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) have made a joint grant of US dollars 517,252 to rehabilitate the Jaffna Technical College, the only government technical college in the region.

The Jaffna Technical College was established in 1959 and has been a very active and well-regarded public institution. As a result of the war, the College lost almost all of its equipment, although the school's buildings largely avoided damage.

105 schools closed

105 schools in the northeast remain closed as a result of the war, according to the Sri Lankan Additional Secretary to the Ministry of Education, P.G.Dayaratne. They are : Jaffna -33: Trincomalee - 22: Batticaloa - 8: Ampa rai - 3: Kalmunai -1: Vavuniya - 8: Kilinochchi -8: Mannar - 2: Mullaitivu - 5 and 14 in the North Central province. He says that another 66 schools do not function since students had left due to lack of basic facilities.

Bread, flour prices up

Sri Lanka has upped the price of bread by 10 percent and that of flour by 11 percent. In effect, the subsidy on bread has been lifted, with bread now costing Rs.8.25 as against Rs,7.50 earlier The annual subsidy of 750 million rupees on bread will now be siphoned towards the war effort.

Nallur festival is on

Despite military rule in Jaffna, the annual festival of the Nallur Kandasamy kovil was in progress under the watchful eyes of the army. The local curfew is reported to have been relaxed to accommodate the worshippers. The festival which began on August 8 will go on till September 3.

EROS man had over 2 lakhs dollars

An ex-militant and EROS leader Shankar Raji was caught at Chennai airport with more than U.S. dollars 225,000 and was produced before a magistrate and was remanded. He was travelling from London. Inquiries are being conducted to find out from where the monies originated, and the purpose for which the massive amount of cash was being brought into Tamilnadu.

Chandrika effigy burnt

An effigy of President Chandrika was burnt in Colombo as the UNP organised protest rallies in several parts of the island to mark what they called government misrule, during three years of power."They have completed half their term and not been able to solve any of the pressing problems of the people". UNP leader Ranil Wickremasinghe said.

Amnesty I team in Jaffna

A 2-member delegation of Amnesty International made a week long visit to Jaffna to obtain a first hand impression of the situation there. The team consisted of Ms.Ingrid Mashage, the Asian Pacific Programme head of AI and S.David, a lawyer by profession. Over 750 persons were reported missing after the army took control of parts of the peninsula.

Converting to Buddhism

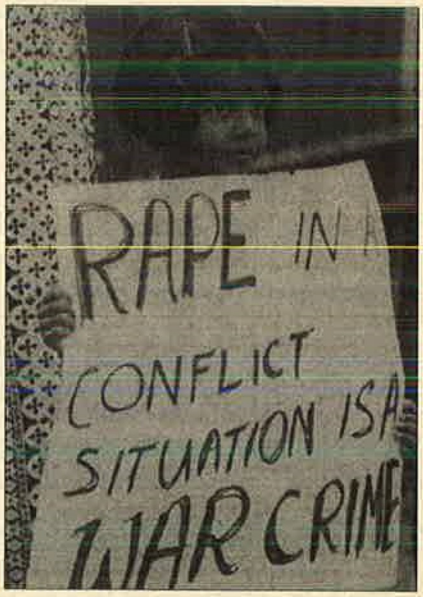
In an attempt to propagate Buddhism in army-occupied Jaffna, Tamil language classes are being held for novice bhikkhus at the Asokarama Mahavihare, Kalutara North by a Sinhalese expert certified teacher of Tamil. The teacher, L.D.de S Ubeyaratne holds classes for two hours every Thursday.

Mr.Ubeyaratne has taught Tamil for police officers of the Katukurunda STF wing too.

Jaffna youth, the best athlete

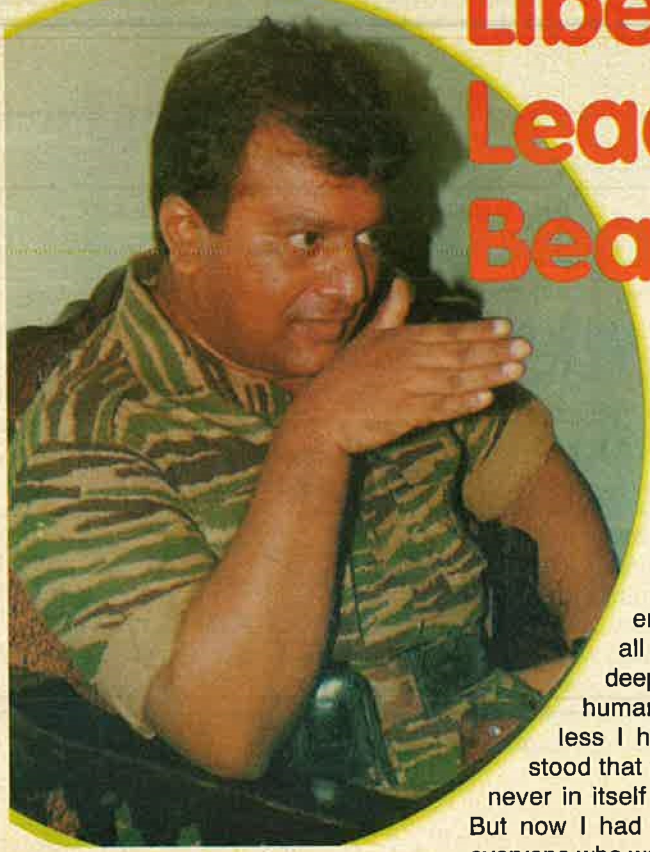
At the north-east province inter-district senior athletic meet held at Vavuniya recently, hundreds of competitors represented Amparai, Batticaloa, Trincomalee ,Vavuniya and Mannar districts. The one solitary representative from Jaffna was Selvarajah Ramanan. His participation was made possible only because he was stranded in Trincomalee on his way to Jaffna. But he won the award for the most outstanding athlete of the meet by winning the hop step and jump event by clearing a distance of 14.20 metres which was a provincial record.

Protest against war crime



An organisation called Vigil Coalition - Sri Lanka,carried out a picketing campaign at Colombo's Hyde Park Corner on 15 August in protest against the gang rape and killing of 35-year old Koneswary, mother of four children, by some policemen at 11th colony village bordering Amparai.

Liberation Leadership: Beauty in Motion



By Kothai: A Credo

I grew up with the knowledge that I should not expect anyone to look out for me, I grew up cynical from a young age. For a child in England, I was unusual. I didn't ever believe in Santa Clause and that meant from the beginning my teachers' words were not seen as the absolute truth, nor were the school books. From the start I had worked out that there were different truths, half truths and lies, and only I should take care of my own interests.

My initiation in life as a Tamil girl in a racist white community in the Midlands was not the best experience for a youngster in the world. But those early years of silent inner rebellion, prepared me well in the skill of critical analysis, a skill I needed to recognise when truth really speaks. Self sufficiently I had survived, and I grew to lead rebellions to take back the truth for the people. Step by step my path led me to discover the true knowledge of the Tamil struggle and from there to an insight into the greatness of its leadership. I then realised something profound about the difference between rebellion and responsibility.

The desire for liberation is common in all of us, it's a need deeply integrated into our human psyche. Nevertheless I had long ago understood that the fact of wanting it never in itself liberated any of us. But now I had to recognise that if everyone who wanted liberation made a decision to act against the oppressive force (in our case against Sinhala racism and Buddhist fundamentalism) still we don't have much, merely a rebellion.

My new discovery was of the great strength of Tamil culture and it was awe inspiring. I understood its strength to be this: responsibility.

Responsibility, a concept which, in English society, I had seen used as a stick to beat us into obedience and subservience, was quite different in Tamil culture. Tamil responsibility had a profound power to lift up any self respecting human being into the realm of the gods.

Tamil responsibility had the power to transform any anarchic rebellion into a national liberation movement, into a movement so strong, trusting and passionate that no brute force or deceptive hypocrisy could exhaust it or disintegrate it. On the contrary, because of the scientific nature of Tamil culture, every attack on the movement made it more intelligent, more powerful, more able to respond with precision.

This responsibility I saw had been taken deep into the very essence of the liberation movement at all levels, but no where more pure than in the leadership. **I must confess I have never managed to unequivocally respect any thing or person in my life without limits, without reservations. That was before. That was until I heard about Pirabakaran, until my cultural ignorance had been penetrated by the beauty of the LTTE in motion. I obsessively read and analysed Pirabakaran's visionary thinking, I worked out the whys and wherefores of his actions, I made it my goal to understand his historical decisions.**

I realised that in contrast to a rebellion, the Tamil Liberation Tigers social, military and political movement was a truly responsible response to oppression: an intelligent response strongly directed, organised, just and purposeful. The elegance of it lay in the huge coordinated activity of the entire Tamil community. I could compare it to the harmony of an orchestra, where every musician takes responsibility for the excellence of their piece as directed by the composer and conductor. I could compare it to a massive engine where every part has been lovingly designed, manufactured and perfected through trials to maximise the capability of the whole. But these analogies pale in comparison to the real living developing organism of the Tamil liberation movement that is growing more powerful day by day, attack after attack, in the jungles, in the towns.

The strength lies in the greatness of the loving intelligence of Pirabakaran's leadership and his steadfastness in doing the right thing by the interests of all Tamil people. His ability to bring out the best in every person, to develop the leadership of others, to hold all Tamils close to him, to keep his heart and his mind working 24 hours in the struggle, collecting information on all sides from the most unlikely places, making scientific calculations on its relevance to the situation, being rational at every juncture. Constantly evolving, constantly strengthening, his liberation movement has taken the creative intelligence of every Tamil and coordinated it into the whole.

And what then was our role? To trust. The nature of Tamil responsibility I could see was to trust every leader who has shown responsibility. The greater the responsibility shown, the greater the trust. The greater the trust, the greater the collective power. The trust lies in the musician playing their particular piece excellently, knowing the conductor and the composer has an overall plan into which their performance is slotted into place. The power of their complete trust means that the rest of the musicians can each also reach for perfection in their own pieces without stress. The power of our collective complete trust produces a huge creative dynamic capability: an enormous, swelling surge of energy supporting every part, from the very top all the way down through every level of leadership, extending to every Tamil woman and man in the world.

So no more need I be the only one to look out for my interests. Now I had a few hundred thousand other Tamils who decided to share that responsibility with me, because my true interests lie only with the interests of the entire Tamil community. ■

Chandrika calls off meeting with Amnesty International team

A 3-member Amnesty International team visited Jaffna , and spent five days there investigating the disappearances of more than 648 Tamils in the peninsula. The disappearances occured after the army occupation of Jaffna.

The Amnesty International team on its return to Colombo was told that its scheduled meeting with the President Chandrika Kumaratunga had been called off without any reason. The team had to be content with meeting Justice and Constitutional Affairs G.L.Peiris, to whom the team members conveyed their concern regarding the disappearances and the failure of the government to account for the missing.

The Amnesty team which spent time in Jaffna talking to members of affected families consisted of former Amnesty Secretary General Ian Martin, expert on humanitarian law David Petrasek and Sri Lanka researcher Ingrid Massage.

The Amnesty team is reported to have briefed the Minister about the hardships caused to civilians by the number of military checkposts in the peninsula.

A new supporter from U.K.

In a letter sent to the Tamil Women's Freedom Movement in U.K. Dorothea from Wales writes:-

21st August 1997.

Many thanks for your letter and the information explaining why the Tamil people have engaged in armed struggle. I do understand why you feel it is necessary to fight back. I am appalled by the evil men and women do to each other. The cases you write about distress me more than I can say and I feel helpless and useless. I pray daily for peace and justice to become the norm for every person in the world.

Though I understand your struggle, I know that history shows us that sooner or later Tamils and Sinhalese will have to sit down together and negotiate a peace. I accept Britain's part in destroying your way of life in 1948 when they gave the power to rule to the Sinhalese. I am ashamed to admit that the little I know of history shows me that we white British people have caused a great deal of harm by interfering all over the world.

I write letters through Amnesty to plead for the lives of any person no matter what nationality or creed, but I am more than happy to write on behalf of the Tamil Women's Freedom Movement.

Could you please explain to me exactly to whom I could write that would be of help to your cause? I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely

Dorothea

With every good wish. May your God bless your work to free your Tamil brothers and sisters.

Tamil Sports Meet in France attracts 800 participants

(From our Paris correspondent)

An LTTE-organised sports meet in France attracted over 800 participants, both male and female. The finals were gone through on 3rd August at the"Stade Jules Ladoumeque" in the presence of a packed stadium of nearly 2000 spectators.

The Chief Guest on the occasion was Professor Jean Maria Julia of Lyon University, France.

The finals of fifty four athletic events were held on that day along with the finals of the Football and Netball matches. All six Tamil clubs in France took part in the events with the _ competitors wildly cheered on by their respective club supporters

The meet began in the morning with the march past, followed by the singing of the Tamil Eelam anthem and the observance of silence in memory of the Tamils who had laid down their lives in the war waged by the Sri Lankan government. The lighting of the Olympic torch followed next.

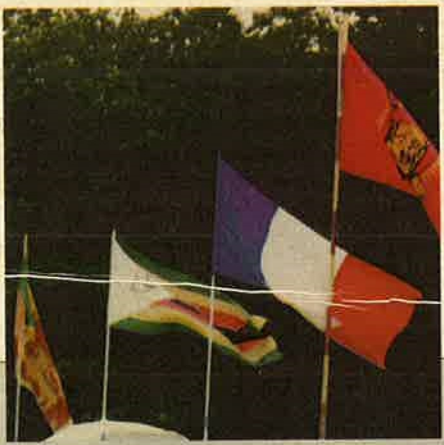
The Tamil Eelam flag was hoisted by the chief guest Professor Julia, while the French flag was hoisted by HOT SPRING editor S.Sivanayagam. The head of the LTTE International Secretariat V.Manoharan and the head of the Tamil Co-ordinating Committee Ilango were both present on the occasion.

All events were keenly contested, particularly the finals of the football match between St.Anthony's Sports Club, Pasaiyur and the Singing Fish Sports Club, Gurunagar. The Singing Fish club managed to edge out the Pasaiyur club by one goal to nil. The netball match ended in a draw, and was refereed by all-Ceylon netball referee Ms.Yasodha Nadarajah.

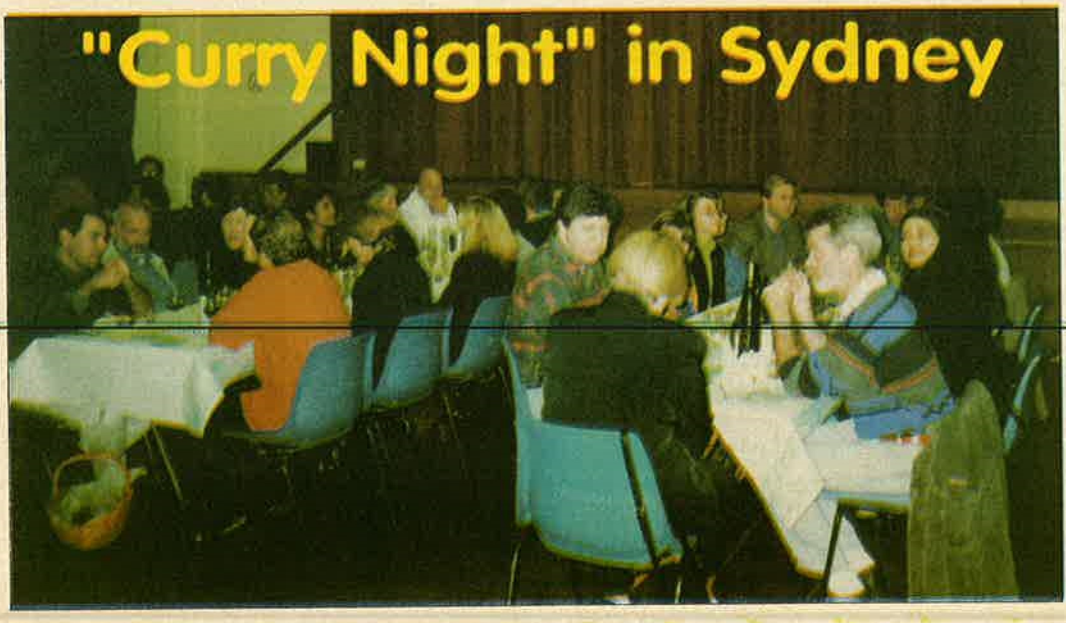
Cricket in France: Tamil club in semifinals

In the Champion de France League Cricket competition held in France , the Tamil "Northern Cricket Club" defeated the mostly Sinhalese Sri Lankan USCA team in a thrilling match and entered the semi-finals of the competition. The match , a 40-over one, was held on 26 July at the Vincennes stadium in France. While the USCA club hoisted their club flag and the Sri Lankan Lion flag, the Northern club hoisted along with their club flag the Tamil Eelam flag, much to the surprise of their rivals. The match itself was played in a spirit of camaraderie. With 270 runs to score in 40 overs to win the match , the Northerners scored 273 runs in 39.4 overs.

Pictures show the group photograph of both teams, and the flags of the two teams.



"Curry Night" in Sydney



Photograph shows"Curry Night" organised by the Eelam Tamil Association to raise funds for the orphanage run by the TRO in Tamil Eelam. Eelam Tamil Association is a New South Wales based Tamil association and member of the Australasian Federation of Tamil Associations.

Curry Night is held three times a year. The paying guests are mostly Australian friends of Eelam Tamils.

Russians tiring of the Chechen imbroglio

Keeping Chechnya within the Russian fold is hard enough; letting Chechnya go is equally hard. With the separatist rebels having won a military victory, and their former chief of staff Aslan Maskhadov installed as president, Russian president Boris Yeltsin is in a quandary. He held talks with the Chechen president at the Kremlin on August 18, only to find that a demand for independence and war reparations for his tiny republic of one million people is very much on the Chechen chief's agenda.

Even a growing number of Russians are now saying openly that it would be better to accept Chechen independence as a fact of life and be done with it. Moscow's Mayor Yuri Luzhkov, who is politically close to Yeltsin himself thinks Chechnya a lost cause. Russia should write Chechnya off, because it will"never be a disciplined part of the federation again".

But Yeltsin, in a desperate attempt to save face keeps throwing inducements . He suggested "power sharing",but Chechnya has said it is out of the question. He has offered Maskhadov a seat in the upper house of Russia's parliament as head of a Russian republic. Maskhadov says if he wanted to sit in Russia's parliament, he would never have gone to war in the first place.

The 21-month war of Chechnya independence had left 50,000 dead. With it had come a virulent anti Russianism. An American correspondent quotes Nura Miyeva, a woman selling chicken in Grozny's market place: "For one generation, two generations, seven generations, for 300 years, we will remember, and we will have our revenge for what the Russians have done".

ALLAHU AKBAR
KURTLAR YURDU
ÇEÇENİSTAN
ASLAN MASKHADOV

A machine-gun toting child sits next to a poster of Chechean President Maskhadev

U.K. lawyer calls Singapore P.M. a "liar" in court

Singapore's Tamil Opposition leader, a Tamil judge, two British Queen's Counsel, and Singapore's Chinese Prime Minister were the participants in a court room drama in Singapore on l9th August.

Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong (55) was the first to take the stand in the case in which he, senior minister Lee Kuan Yew and nine other leaders of the ruling People's Action Party brought against Mr.J.B.Jeyaratnam (71), leader of the Workers' Party.

Mr.Goh was intensely questioned by British Queen's Counsel George Carman, known for his courtroom eloquence, and Judge S.Rajendran cautioned the lawyer several times not to pass comments when posing questions.

Mr.Carman accused Mr.Goh of "not being truthful to the court" after the Prime Minister gave evidence on events that followed an election-eve Workers party rally on January 2 when Mr.Jeyaratnam allegedly defamed the plaintiffs.

"If I could, I will sue him in court", a red-faced Goh told the packed and tension-filled court room."I think it (branded a liar) is an insult to the judiciary and to the government", an enraged Goh said when answering his lawyer Thomas Shields, also a Queen's Counsel. Under Singapore law, statements made in court are classified as "absolutely privileged".

Prime Minister Goh

U.N. SubCommission, Geneva

Sri Lanka: Human Rights Violated with impunity

A long series of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) levelled charges of human rights abuses in countries around the world , as the Sub Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities began a third day in Geneva on 7 August. Some 40 NGOs had registered to speak under the agenda item, generally one of the Sub Commission's most contentious, in the words of the Press release issued that day.

Deirdre McConnell of North South XXI said her organisation was concerned about continuing violations of humanitarian laws in Sri Lanka and the genocidal proportions of the current Sri Lanka offensive in the Tamil homeland. This was a new and serious situation which had killed 80,000 Tamil civilians and displaced another 700,000. The people in the north of the mainland were being subjected to aerial bombing by the Sri Lankan air force.

It was an inescapable fact, she said, that there was impunity in Sri Lanka: killings of Tamil people by the Sri Lankan armed forces, and the systematic abuse of the fundamental collective rights of the Tamil people were too numerous to list. In March, a joint statement by 53 nongovernmental organisations had urged the Commission on Human Rights to adopt a resolution calling on the Sri Lankan government to cease all military operations against the Tamils; to withdraw their occupying forces: to lift the economic blockade in the north and east, and to secure a political solution to the conflict which recognised the right of the Tamil people to determine their political status.

S.V.Kirupaharan of International Educational Development, said the Sri Lanka government was responsible for the genocide of Tamils. In the Tamil areas occupied by the Sri Lankan military. The government denied people medical supplies and adequate food; in fact the government was using food as a political weapon, a clear violation of humanitarian law. Since the Sri Lankan government was engaged in this policy of starvation and malnutrition against Tamils with the intent of destroying them as a national community, the government was also guilty of the crime of genocide. Moreover, the government used rape against Tamil women and children as a weapon, something that was well documented. In view of those horrendous war crimes in the occupied Tamil areas, the Subcommission was urged to pass a resolution recommending that the Security Council set up a War Crimes Tribunal to bring the Sri Lankan war criminals to justice. Peace negotiations could not take place when one party was under occupation; conditions should be created for both parties to enter into talks on an equal basis and of their free will.

Verena Graf of the International League for the Rights and Liberation of Peoples, said the plight of the Tamils in the north and east of Sri Lanka was rapidly deteriorating because of the ongoing war and the government's blockade imposed on the region; there - also were enormous problems caused by the massive flow of refugees spurred by the fighting there.

73 disappearances in Kilinochchi, AI told

The Citizens' Committee of Kilinochchi in a recent letter to Amnesty International UK says 73 Tamil civilians of Kilinochchi have disappeared at the hands of the Sinhala military since July 1996. The Tamil town of Klinochchi was captured last year by government forces after a military operation called Sath Jeya. From time to time, displaced Tamil residents of the district returning to their former homes to collect valuables have been killed by Sri Lankan troops waiting to ambush them. Usually, the Tamil returnees have been shot or knifed to death by soldiers. A few people have also been taken prisoner. The Citizens' Committee has called on Amnesty International to help trace the whereabouts of the 73 missing persons. An appendix of names, addresses and dates relating to the disappearances has been attached to the letter.

Jaffna Old Boys rally round in Britain

THE ASIAN AGE, London, published simultaneously in New Delhi, Mumbai, Calcutta and Bangalore,carries the following account in its issue of August 27. The report was written by Kalpana Chauhan:

London, Aug.26: The Jaffna old boys network got together for a day of cricket on Monday at the Warren Farm Sports Centre in Southall which played host to the 175-year old Jaffna Schools Sports Association (UK).

Nearly 4,000 alumni of 32 schools from the Jaffna region of Sri Lanka and their children took part in the cricket and netball festival for the sixth year running, enabling them to rekindle the magic of their schooldays in Jaffna, now torn by a bitter civil war. The event raised £10, 000 which will go towards maintaining the war-ravaged schools back home.

The Jaffna Hindu College won the Challenge Shield trophy, pipping Jaffna Central College for the second year running. Dr.Raj Chandran, a leading member of the Tamil community and a CRE commissioner said: "The event was nearly cancelled because of rain but it turned out to be a successful day and members of the Tamil community enjoyed the festival and the opportunity to get together with old friends". He added: "The event is quite important for Tamils as it allows the younger generation to feel a sense of identity and for the old boys and girls to reminisce on old times".,

Louis Vasanthan, president of the JSSA (UK) said: "In the past few years the JSSA has grown remarkably in its membership and activities among the Tamil community in the UK", adding that they have expanded their activities to provide more space for the active involvement of women and children.

"Peace Package": P. A's Political Mirage

Statement by AGOTIC

"During the past three years, the government used the allegedly impending release of the "peace package" as a political fig leaf to cover up the war against the Tamil people," says the Action Group of Tamils in Colombo (AGOTIC) in a statement issued recently.

The follwing is the full text of the statement:-

President Chandrika Kumaratunga announced that her People Alliance (PA) Government's " devolution proposals" will made public in November 97. This is nothing new. She made the same claim many times before. In May 1994 more than three years ago, Mrs. Kumaratunga began the campaign for the August 1994 parliamentary elections. At that time she promised to publish the PA's "devolution proposals" in its election manifesto. Nothing happened. As PA's presidential candidate, she promised to release " devolution proposals" before the November presidential election. Nothing happened. After Mrs. Kumaratunga was elected President, she pledge to present " devolution proposals to the parliamentary Select Committee (PSC) on constitutional reform on the 24th of November 1994. Nothing happened. No attempt was made by the President to publish a conflict resolution proposal after the Cessation of Hostilities (COH) in January 1995 between the Government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE).

On the 3rd of August 1995, President Kumaratunga's devolution proposals" were made public. The country and Tamils and Muslims in particular thirsting for peace assumed that they were the Government's conflict resolution proposal. But with in four days the minister for the Law and constitutional affairs, Prof. G.L. Peiris, backtracked: he qualified the President proposals as merely her own " Basis Ideas". So the President proposals were not the Government's proposal. The Tamil and Muslim people watched in disbelief.

Prof. Peiris glibly explained that the President proposals will be basis of PA Government's conflict resolution proposal, to be unveiled before the end of that year (199). When he released the Draft Provisions on the 16th of January 1996, they appeared to be the Government's proposal. But again hopes were shattered . In the Draft provisions, which superseded the "Basis Ideas", Prof. Peiris diluted or altogether eliminated key provisions of the 1995 President's Proposals which are indispensable for conflict resolution. Simultaneously he informed a shocked people that the Draft Provisions again are in fact NOT the Government's proposal. The draft provisions he said, would be deliberated by the PSC no constitutional reform. After the PSC reached a consensus, the Government's proposal would be finalised incorporating the PSC's opinion. The people and Tamils and Muslims in particular suspected the inclusion of the PSC to be a delaying tactic and they were fast losing confidence in the so-called "peace process".

While the PSC was deliberating the Draft Provisions, Prof. Peiris unilaterally and arbitrarily by passed the PSC and released the Draft Constitution to the press in April 1997. He also declared that the PSC failed to conclude its deliberations by the stipulated date he would table the Draft Constitution in parliament by the end of the May 1997. He evidently aimed to convince the Sri Lankans and the international community that the PA Government is sincere in its quest for a negotiated solution to the Tamil Question. However Prof. Peiris must surely know that his political arm-twisting and provocative goading of the PSC will only antagonise the Opposition parties represented in the PSC. Predictably the united National Party (UNP) leader Mr. Ranil Wickremasinghe, reached by stating that his party will not support the Draft Constitution in Parliament.

So Minister Peiris in effect made the proceedings of the PSC irrelevant and politically torpedoed the Draft Provisions while maintaing deniability.

Meanwhile, the Draft Constitution is incomplete. It does not contain most of the provisions relating to "devolution" which Prof. Peiris said, would be published by the end of May. This did not happen. So the Draft Constitution is also not the Government's conflict resolution proposal. Although the PA held a two-day seminar three years too late in July to educate the government members about the "peace package", provisions on 2devolution" which are alleged to exits were not taken up for discussion. Therefore the PA parliamentarians are still ignorant of any conflict resolution proposal. Now the president has again postponed the release of the provisions, if any, to November 1997.

The PA Government, then, has dodged putting forward a conflict resolution proposal for three long years.

Indeed if the recent instant of blatant dishonesty is any indication, a sincere and viable conflict resolution proposal will not see the light of day. A document, titled "Devolution of Power and Power Over Land", explaining the devolution of power over land in the Draft Constitution was published by the Constitutional reform and Information Section of the Ministry of Law and Constitutional Affairs. The Tamil and Sinhala versions of the same document are vastly different from one another. The Sinhala version categorically stated that the central government will retain all powers; but the Tamil version proclaimed extensive devolution. Surely the PA Government is no longer entitled to the benefit of doubt.

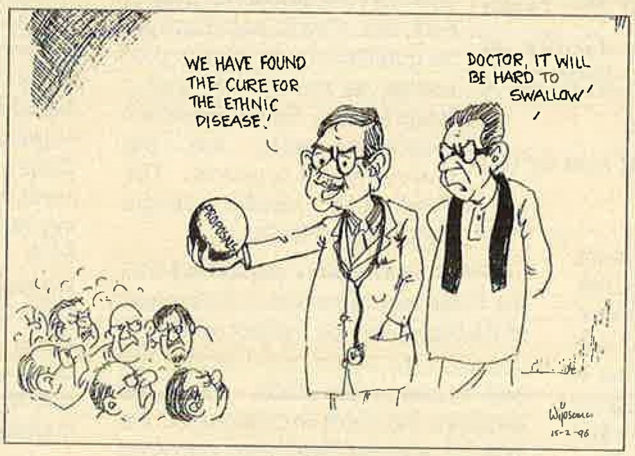
During the past three years, the Government used the allgelly impending release of the "peace package" as a political fig-leaf to cover up the war against the Tamil people.

The collaborating Tamil parties reinforced the justification and the propped up the war against Tamils by alleging that the PA has a credible conflict resolution proposal when in fact none existed. The PA mined Tamil collaboration, and Tamil parties deliberately colluded with the PA, to create the misleading impression that most Tamils are on the side of the Government and thereby to politically marginalise the LTTE as a group of "extremists".

Moreover the PA skilfully exploited the nonsensical opposition generated by Sinhalese nationalists against a non-existent "devolution proposals" as evidence to assert the alleged existence of a "peace package".

The PA is beginning the second half of its 6 year term of office. It has begun preparing for the next parliamentary elections and so it is opportunistically fostering the illusion of conflict resolution also to satisfy the general demand for peace among the people.

Simultaneously the PA is devising a cunning campaign to demonstrate that the UNP and most other parties in the parliamentary Opposition are undermining peace, that they are obstructing the formulation of "devolution proposals. The PA made the first tactical move in this politically bankrupt campaign when Prof. Peiris provoked the UNP by unilaterally releasing the Draft Constitution. The second move was to issue empty threats about holding a farcical " non-binding" referendum if the UNP opposes the adoption of the hitherto unseen "devolution proposals" in Parliament. In short, the Pa is looking for political scapegoats in order to win back the support of Tamil and Muslim voters.


WE HAVE FOUND THE CURE FOR THE ETHNIC DISEASE!
PROPOSALS
DOCTOR, IT WILL BE HARD TO SWALLOW'
Wijesoma
15-2-96

The Government is urgently preparing for the elections because the PA coalition is crumbling - the leader of the Democratic United National Front (DUNF) (Lalith) was expelled from the Cabinet. Moreover, the Lanka Sama Samaja Party (LSSP) and the Ceylon Workers Congress (CWC), both PA coalition members, have signal their displeasure. Chandrika sycophants are rapidly distancing themselves from the president: the editors of Pravada, for example, lamented that " the PA regime does not have single positive achievement its credit in terms or promised reforms" (vol. 5/2). The supine Tamil parties which opportunistically collaborated with the PA are now making what they think are threatening noises about withdrawing their support in Parliament. The political rates are deserting the sinking PA ship!

It is now crystal clear that the PA government never had nor does it now have any intention to resolve the Tamil Question politically. Its aim is to militarily crush Tamil resistance. The ongoing genocidal war unleashed by the Government against the Tamil people in the North -East province (NEP) seeks to achieve precisely this aim.

The so-called "peace lobbies" in Colombo cynically urged and support the war. Before the occupation of Jaffna, they claimed the war was necessary to "weaken" the LTTE in order to force it to come to the negotiating table. After Jaffna they claim that the LTTE will not negotiate from a position of weakness and that the war must be fought until the LTTE is totally eliminated. This fact cannot be masked by their token of essentially insincere calls for an immediate end to the war and for negotiations between the Government and the LTTE. Thus the "peace lobbies", and West-European donors and conflict resolution partners, have a major and direct share in the death and destruction heaped upon the Tamil people. The editors of Pravada in particular were members of the PA's informal think tank which formulated this "kill, burn, slay" policy. They were also key members of President Kumaratunga's team, which was sent supposedly to "negotiate" with the LTTE but in time bought time to perfect this draconian policy. So they, and their sponsors, have made a lasting contribution to the unprecedented tragedy that stalks the NEP.

Finally, the Action Group of Tamils in Colombo (AGOTIC) has no hesitation whatsoever in concluding as follows. The LTTE's decision to resume military action on the 19th of April 1995 is fully vindicated by the dishonesty of the PA Government, the obstinate refusal of the Government to commit itself to a conflict resolution proposal for the past three years, and by the duplicity of the "peace lobbies"

What lessons has the UNP learnt from the events of the past three years?

Dr. K Velauthapillai, President
Dr. S. Sathananthan, Secretary

from the HOT SPRING archives Issue 1

What a one-time Tamil M.P. wrote to Margaret Thatcher

This is a letter sent to British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, 13 years ago, dated August 21, 1984

Although signed as "An Anonymous Lankan Tamil Refugee", the author of the letter was an ex-M.P. He represented a hill country electorate in the elections held in 1947. He is hardly remembered now, but he lives.

As was to be expected, the letter drew no response from the Conservative government of that time,but as a document that originated around the time when the war of Tamil independence was taking shape, his views have historical value. The letter also expresses the disillusionment of a Tamil who lived among the Sinhalese for over 50 years, only to end up being deprived of not only his home and property, but also his sense of belonging.

The letter has been slightly abridged in parts

- Ed. HS.

August 21 1984

Madam,

I am a middle-class citizen of Ceylon (now known officially as the "Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka") - belonging to the Tamil community, the second largest in the island.

I have for over fifty years lived in South Lanka with the majority Sinhalese community until July 27, 1983, when my house and all belongings were looted and burnt by Sinhalese mobs, with the police and army looking on, and even participating directly. I am now without a house or a country to call my own like thousands of Tamils whose houses and properties were destroyed in July 1983. Even worse was the killing, and in many cases burning alive of innocent Tamils, several hundreds according to the government even, but several thousands according to disinterested and more authentic sources.

I must for reasons you understand remain anonymous, but I beg of you not to discard this appeal of mine as worthless for that reason. The unfortunate plight of the Tamils in Sri Lanka after 1948 when Pax Britanica was replaced by Vis Major of the Sinhalese and the sufferings and indignities they underwent after 1948 intensified into anti-Tamil pogroms with the introduction of the Sinhala Only law in 1956. It became a frequent epidemic in Sri Lanka, ending perhaps for the time being with the most serious of all, the holocaust of July 1983.This pogrom has been given some publicity by the foreign Press, other independent media and the Amnesty International and the International Committee of Jurists (ICJ), all institutions whose fairness and objective approach cannot be challenged by anyone.

The Army, the Navy and the Police, the mobs, and even the jailors inside the jails were free to fire and kill Tamils with impunity. Arms were made readily available to these criminals with and without uniforms, and not one was punished. Even prosecutions (rarely launched) failed before communal-minded juries. On two days in the last week of July 1983, fifty two Tamil political prisoners and detainees held under the Emergency laws, and remanded in the capital's high security prison of the Sinhalese government, were mercilessly attacked and killed by fellow prisoners. But not one of the culprits was identified by the numerous jailors and prison staff who must have been seeing and dealing with them daily, obviously due to some strange temporary blindness these officials suffered.

Elsewhere, in Jaffna, on 11th August 1984, government troops evacuated the officers from the Chunnakam police station, leaving behind in a cell several Tamil youths (taken into custody by police for questioning) bound and gagged, set two booby trap bombs which left 19 persons dead and several other Tamils in the vicinity seriously injured when the bomb blast blew up the station building.

The government and its propagandists want the civilised world to believe that these cowardly attacks were not planned and organised by the guardians of the law. Even the President of Sri Lanka who is in sole charge of security under the Constitution and his stooges did nothing to prevent violence against the Tamils in spite of being forewarned from 1977; in spite of appeals by the Tamils from all shades of political opinion: in spite of his assurance to protect every citizen including the Tamils, though he claims "to have the support of the majority of the Tamils".

The Tamils in south Lanka, which is occupied mainly by the Sinhalese, including Colombo the capital, and in other provincial towns, are claimed by the President to be his supporters. This is correct factually because in the south the choice was between the President's party and the more anti-Tamil Sri Lanka Freedom Party. The latter was the one which ushered in communal and anti-Tamil policies into public life from 1956 onwards, and was in power practically till 1976/77. The irony of it all is that we the Tamils in south Sri Lanka, the admitted and proclaimed supporters of the President, have been killed, robbed, disgraced, burnt and rendered homeless in south Sri Lanka where we lived , without the President raising a finger to save us in July 1983 and after. He even told the foreign Press that he was not bothered by the problems and safety of the Tamils, but had to respect the "upsurge of the national feelings of the Sinhalese These were the killers and looters and vandals who burnt Tamils and houses and properties of Tamils !

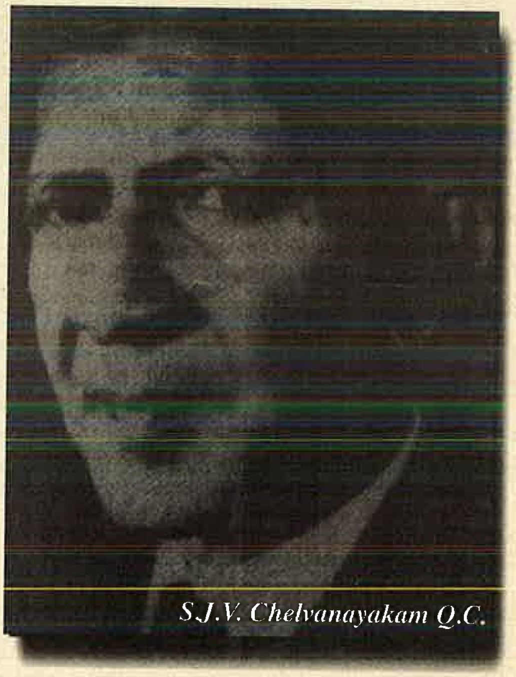
G.G. Ponnambalam Q.C.

The propaganda by the government and by the Sinhala organisations in foreign countries falsely pinpoints the killing of 13 soldiers by the Tamil youths called "Tigers" as the provocation. The Tamil youths had however retaliated the same way from 1975/76 against "Tamil traitors and collaborators" and security men in uniform, the symbols of the Sinhala oppression in the Tamil homeland. **Though Tamil leaders, Chelvanayakam, Ponnambalam, Tiruchelvam, Nadesan, all Queen's Counsel, disapproved of violence, it was perhaps too much to expect young men to put up with the cruel behaviour of the Sinhala police and army of occupation , and not to hit back in some measure at least.** Anyway, the "Tigers" were not heard of till 1975/76 when the World Tamil Conference held in Jaffna , attended by several international Tamil scholars was broken up by the police causing a stampede and deaths by electrocution.

The killing of 13 soldiers in Jaffna was therefore long after violence against Tamils became settled policy of Sinhalese governments beginning 1956. It must be remembered that the President of Sri Lanka and his supporters have killed and rendered homeless Tamils living hundreds of miles away from where the 13 soldiers were killed; people who have lived among the Sinhalese, who are vicariously punished in the south, because in the north the police and armed forces are unable to vanquish the "two or three hundred Tigers".

The Rt.Rev. Wickremasinghe in his swan song and appeal to his Sinhalese compatriots published in the Lankan paper "SUN" of of October 28, 1983 refers to the "armed forces as inactive spectators or active supporters of the mobs who attacked the lives and properties of the Tamils in July 1983". It is people like Rev. Wickremasinghe who can redeem the Sinhalese and even Sri Lanka. It is strange that only the Christian Church has condemned the events of July '83 and sympathised with the Tamil victims. By burning and killing the Tamils not only in Sinhalese south Sri Lanka but also in the traditional homeland in the northern and eastern provinces, the Sinhalese have established that they and the Tamils cannot co-exist as equals in Sri Lanka.

Tamil leaders even before 1948 sensed this danger that power politics of the Sinhalese majority would spell the complete doom of the Tamil minority even in their respected and historically proved Tamil homeland in the north and east of Sri Lanka. That is why, Ponnambalam, a Queen's Counsel and leader of the Tamil Congress demanded 50/50 representation for all the minorities of Lanka, but failed to get acceptance. That is why another Queen's Counsel and leader of the Federal Party, Chelvanayakam, demanded a Federal constitution for Lanka, which is in vogue in so many civilised major democracies, to enable the Tamils to coexist with the Sinhalese. He too failed because the Sinhalese were


S.J.V. Chelvanayakam Q.C.

hell-bent on reducing the Tamils to semislavery status in north and east Lanka after driving thwem out from the south.

When it became clear to the Tamil leaders as a result of the recurring anti-Tamil pogroms and other laws depriving the Tamils of their right to co-exist as equal citizens, the Tamil United Liberation Front was formed, with the demand for Tamil independence. The Sinhalese suddenly became fond of the north and east, more so because the vital port of Trincomalee was in Tamil territory. **Today, Trincomalee is being dangled as a carrot by the Sinhalese to the great powers like America even though it is part of the ancient Tamil kingdom of Kulakottan Maharajah who erected and endowed the ancient Koneswaram Temple of the Hindus there. In that temple even now carved in stone remains that prophetic inscription : that at a later period, the temple erected by Kulakottan would be conquered by "the cat's eye", then "the brown eye", and then "the blue eye" before it becomes the running sore of "the Vadugas". The word "Vaduga" is not clear and is damaged. As prophesised, the Portuguese, then the Dutch, and then the British have ruled over Trincomalee. The last part of the verse cannot refer to the Sinhalese who claim to be pure Indo-Aryans like Hitler and not Vadugas who are Dravidians of South India.**

For two thousand years or more the Sinhalese and Tamils have lived in Lanka, invade each other's territories and ruled over same, only as invaders and invaded, without racial and ethnic animosities. In ancient times, wars of conquest were a hobby with the kings - so it was in Lanka. It is also an admitted fact of history that when the Portuguese appeared on the island's horizon there were three separate kingdoms, Kotte in coastal south, the Kandyan kingdom in the central hill country and the Tamil kingdom including the Tamil Wanni of the north and eastern coastal Lanka. In 1505, Kotte surrendered to the Portuguese. In 1619 the Tamil kingdom was conquered by the Portuguese. In the battle of Jaffna, its king Sangiii was captured and taken to Goa in Portuguese India and tried for conspiring with the Sinhalese to drive the Portuguese out of Kotte ! He was hanged for that offence. Only the Tamil kingdom fought and lost to the foreigners.

Chelvanayakam(left) and Ponnambalam at an election rally before their parting of ways.

When the British left the island in 1948, they hoped that Section 29 of the Soulbury Constitution would sufficiently safeguard Tamil rights. But the new Sinhalese masters of Sri Lanka had none to question or challenge them. A new constitution was framed and accepted and Section 29 went overboard. Lanka became a republic and there was no appeal possible to the Crown or the Privy Council.

Thus, the Tamils became a doomed community. Their only hope is, just like many other countries and people seeking independence, that the democratic peoples and nations and the U.N. which provides for the restoration of human rights would rescue them.

The blood and tears of the Tamils of Sri Lanka , and their case for the restoration of their homeland to enable them to live in peace and amity as free men call for the immediate and sympathetic consideration by you, Madam, as the Prime Minister of a British government that trusted the Sinhalese to respect Tamil rights.

The President of Sri Lanka has already visited your country in June as an honoured guest. As the head of a former colony he is entitled to a great welcome. It is said that his visit to Britain is to put right the image of Sri Lanka damaged and shamed by the horrors of July '83. Protocol might call for mutual garlands and compliments on such an occasion, but the Lankan Tamils beg of you not to give him and Sri Lanka a clean bill, knowing even without my appeal, the correct facts about events in Lanka from your own advisers and from the world media. Any certificate from you that he is a democrat and Sri Lanka is a democracy would be a travesty of those words and would be used by him and his legions to finish off the Tamils for ever.

You as the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom have not hesitated to impose on countries, large or small, seeking your aid and recognition, conditions demanded of them to conform to democratic, civilised and human standards. Sri Lanka's President should not be allowed to get away with it nor fool anyone in Britain and America by quoting from the Buddha and Gandhi.

May this appeal receive your attention. May God bless you and your great country.

Yours faithfully,

An Anonymous Lankan Tamil refugee

P.S. Since it is a crime in Sri Lanka to discuss freedom for the Tamils, I regret that I have to remain anonymous.

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Anti-Tamil reports by paid agents? Ottawa paper retracts report

Ottawa, Aug 21,1997 (SAMS) *The Ottawa Citizen*, the most popular newspaper in the national capital region of Canada, last week retracted a defamatory report, which appeared on the 14-August-97, which Tamil leaders suspect was commissioned by the Sri Lankan High Commission.

The report titled "Canadian Tamils terrorized, official says" was filed by Salim Jiwa and initially appeared in the Vancouver Province newspaper on 13-August-97. The report quotes an unnamed "top immigration department source" as saying that the Tamils living in Canada, especially in Toronto, are subject to extortion by the members of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam. It also said that those Tamils who refused to part with their money suffered broken limbs and vicious beatings.

The report outraged the *Ottawa-Carleton* Tamil community and people started calling the Ottawa Citizen office at Baxter Street as early as 6.00 a.m. Many also sent letters to the editor. ***Bala Balasingam's*** letter was typical:

"Your report's suggestion that one can extort money from the Tamil community at will is an insult to the whole community... It is also an insult to the Canadian law enforcement authorities, and calls into question the credibility of the Canadian judicial system...it implies that the system is incapable of dealing with criminal activities." She added "I have been in Canada for 12 years and never been subjected to any type of extortion. Neither have I heard of anyone from the Tamil community forced to contribute to any organizations."

These protests prompted the chief editor, ***Scott Anderson***, to investigate the matter and resulted in the retraction of Salim Jiwa's report. The retracting article, titled "Police, Tamil emigres dispute extortion stories" was published on the following day and quotes ***Insp. Roy Teefe*** of the Metropolitan Toronto Police Department as saying that "he had not heard of any incidents in which Tamils were forced to contribute to the separatist war in Sri Lanka." The report also quotes the press liaison for Immigration Canada, ***Huguette Shouldice***, who contradicted Salim Jiwa's report by saying, "the immigration department was not aware of large number of people being charged with criminal activity."

Tamil community leaders say that unlike in the past, they are now better prepared to handle such reports. "We are monitoring most media outlets and will take stern legal action against any reporters who write such lies" says an Ottawa region Tamil community leader.

Tamil leaders accuse that Salim Jiwa's report was commissioned by Sri Lankan government agents as part of its anti-Tamil propaganda. They point out that, recently, the Sri Lankan government allocated $2.5 million (US) for its propaganda effort in north America and said that during the last two years, Sri Lankan agents had commissioned several unscrupulous reporters to file false and misleading reports against the Tamil expatriate community which, they say, is actively campaigning against the gross human rights violations by the Sri Lankan military in the north and east of the island. "To cover-up the atrocities committed by the armed forces, Sri lankan government is waging an international propaganda war against the Tamils living in the west. We are determined to expose the activities of the Sri Lankan government," one said.

However, the Vancouver Province newspaper news editor, ***Fabian Dowson***, denied any involvement of Sri Lankan agents in the report. "Our crime reporter Salim Jiwa was assigned to this investigative report" he said in a telephone interview with SAMS. He also said that his newspaper is closely following the story and has made contact with local Tamil community leaders. "We had a long and fruitful discussion with the head of the Tamil society and listened to their side of the story. We also explained our position.," he added.

The head of the Eelam Tamil association of British Columbia, Mr. L. Pathmayogan, acknowledged that a meeting took place but said many of his questions were not answered satisfactorily. "We wanted to know why the reporter did not contact any law enforcement agents nor any of the alleged victims but based his report solely on an anonymous 'top immigration official'". Pathmayogan said that Vancouver Tamil community is meeting soon to discuss future action and he expects a large turnaround.

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JAYEWARDENE'S YEARS OF POWER

A Contemporary Assessment (1987)

Part VIII

(Continued from previous issues)

The fact that a 7-year political dormancy separated Junius Richard Jayewardene's years of power and his death at the age of 90 may have had something to do with the charitable references, and the flattering obituaries and cosmetic acclaim that he earned at his death.

Public memory being what it is, short, and often selective, HOT SPRING brings to its readers the eighth and last part of a contemporary assessment and narrative of Jayewardene's years of power, written and published in 1987.

IN a 40-page booklet, titled 10 YEARS OF JAYEWARDENE RULE, the author S. Sivanayagam covered the years 1977 - 1987, and records a chunk of history that was both dark and depressing, and illustrative of the ignoble style of Jayewardene's governance.

S.Sivanayagam

SRI
LANKA
10
Years of
Jayewardene
Rule

Massacres of 1986

There is no disputing the fact that,from newspaper men's point of view,whether they catch him in moods of diffidence or confidence, the Sri Lankan President makes "good copy". But from the point of view of the suffering Tamils, they know him as a man who does not give away anything for nothing. The wily President has been gaining considerable amount of propaganda yardage by honouring visiting journalists with "special interviews". Looking back at the President's pontifications, at a distance of one and a half years, many things that he said sound hollow. It matters little now. Arrogance of power and Journalism have after all one thing in common - they are both ephemeral!

What was happening in the Tamil areas in Sri Lanka while Kuidip Nayar sat talking to President Jayewardene in Colombo ? Everything that the world should have been told, but had little chance of knowing; and that includes the Sinhalese people who lived in their own world in the south, effectively brain-washed by the Colombo media, a media which started misinforming the people as part of a calculated Government policy but ended up by brain-washing itself. On Good Friday this year came the Trincomalee district massacre of 127 Sinhalese, including at least 60 Army, Navy, Air Force and Police personnel. A curfew was imposed, and the hunt for the estimated 50 gunmen began. Sri Lanka was stunned said Western media reports. "Christians thronged churches and heard emotional sermons by the priests", said the Independent, London. On 20th April, 15 more were killed in the Sinhalese settlement of Jayanthipura. John Rettie wrote in the Guardian, London (21 April) : "The Sri Lankan Government is looking more shaken today, following last Friday's massacre near Trincomalee, than at any time since 150 Sinhalese men, women and children were shot by the Tamil Tigers in Anuradhapura two years ago". He added "The Government is left with an awkward question to answer. If all this brutality can be laid at the door of the Tamil Tigers - and perhaps it can -- then does the Government's military writ run at all in the eastern areas around Trincomalee and Polonnaruwa?". And then came the bigger disaster, that same day as Rettie's report appeared, the Colombo bus station bomb. Victims : 150. All these naturally affected the Sinhalese people. Hate, fear, a sense of revulsion were feelings that were understandable. But they were also in a state of daze; and bewilderment. Somewhere in the back of their minds, was there a gnawing doubt that terrible as these developments were, there was more to it than what they saw ? That more of it was all happening elsewhere - in the Tamil areas.

While Kuidip Nayar was talking to the President in the third week of January 1986, not one mention appears to have come up about the massacre of Tamil civilians on the Sunday of 19th at Iruthayapuram in the Batticaloa district. Why? Three Church workers including the Catechist were pulled out of the church of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, by STF commandos, sprayed with bullets, and in the course of a violent 2-hour spree 21 other Tamils were left dead wherever they happened to be. On the 25th, 1 1 helpless plantation Tamil refugees waiting for a train at Kilinochchi Railway station, men, women and children, were mowed down in a matter of minutes. On 10th February, black-uniformed "commandos" in Vavuniya waylaid a Tamil businessman in a Peugeot car, robbed him of Rs. 75 thousand cash and jewellery, locked him and his two companions in the car and set fire to both vehicle and occupants. On the 19th February nearly 100 farmers, farm labourers and some "gypsies" working in paddy farms in an isolated hamlet called Udumbankulam in the Amparai district ware surrounded by members of the armed forces; they were hacked with their own reaping knives, kicked with boots, tied up in twos, and shot down finally and made into a vast human heap. Stacks of paddy, straw, and timber and cadjan pulled out from a nearby hut were used to make a mass cremation. Three women chased away earlier hid themselves behind a bluff and watched the gruesome scene in terrified fear. Documented eye witness accounts of all these brutalities are available, with the names of practically all victims. Why were the Sinhalese people not told about these, some might ask? No, strangely enough, they were told But what were they told? It makes fascinating fiction

The Iruthayapuram frenzy of Jan. 19th got transformed into a heroic battle. "FIERCE BATTLE - MANY CASUALTIES" said the Sun headline of the 20th. "Two Policemen and nearly 50 terrorists laydead in thewake of a 10-hour face-to-face confrontation between the security forces and Tamil separatists near Batticaloa town yesterday... The security forces then called in reinforcements and Air Force helicopters joined the battle. Amidst the raging battle there were conflicting accounts of the number of terrorists dead... Batticaloa Police confirmed the deaths of 30 terrorists, but the Defence Ministry in Colombo could only confirm the death of 21 terrorists... the Defence Ministry added that of the 21 terrorists who had died, 14 died of gunfire and seven committed suicide by taking cyanide capsules..." It merely showed what level of sophistication the Colombo media had achieved in myth-making. The Kilinochchi killing was explained thus : "A demented soldier went berserk and fired his personal weapon in a frenzy at the railway station killing ten persons including some women and children. The other soldiers immediately overpowered the demented soldier and took his weapon away..." As for the Vavuniya car incident, the Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation did not show much imagination. It said that in a clash between two terrorist groups three terrorists were shot dead and burnt inside the car? The Udumbankuiam massacre turned out to be another gun battle between the heroic forces of Sri Lanka and the dirty terrorists, except the locale was changed from Udumbankuiam in Amparai to Lahugala. "40 terrorists killed in hour-long battle in the Lahugala jungle" said the Colombo report. Perhaps it was Machiavelli himself who said that it is a fool who fights his own battle. The poor Sinhalese youths who are sent to battle for some of them to come back home in polythene bags, the vast mass of ignorant Sinhalese who think that their government is fighting for the survival of the Sinhalese nation, the middle-class simpletons who write patriotic letters to the Editors of newspapers, - none of them have woken up to the fact that they are not fighting for their survival. No nation or people, whether they be Tamils or Sinhalese could be wiped away so easily, by internal or external forces. What they are all fighting for, is for the political survival of one man - President Jayewardene! That probably is his biggest achievement in 10 years of rule. ❑

Concluded

What Chandrika said about J.R. two years ago

In a lengthy interview given to Malini Parthasarathy, of THE HINDU, (January 24), President Chandrika said:

"The last government thought that they could use violence to solve the problem which did not succeed at all...The second attitude was that you could just manipulate. J.R.Jayawardene was a master at manipulating human beings and Situations.. This has all kinds of very unpleasant and unsavoury consequences because it was not politics that he was doing... The difference between theirs and ours is that, basically we are utterly and sincerely committed to peace. But it is not peace without any morality. We have very clear principles on which our discussions and negotiations are based. One is that the unity of Sri Lanka is not negotiable. But unity does not mean unitary ".

A first hand report from the war front !

"Sri Lankan troops overcame Tamil Tiger rebel resistance and took command of a northern railway station in a battle that claimed 76 lives"

Reuter report Aug, 22, quoting the Sri Lankan Defence Ministry.

International news agencies like Reuters, the AFP, the AP, and even the prestigious BBC have so far been reporting the Sri Lankan war against the Tamils from a distance of 200 miles. Although they are all armed with very powerful long-range telescopes, they tend to miss much of the action. HOT SPRING has now commissioned the *Mulagu Thanni* international news agency to report the action from the front lines. Here is the first report.

20,000 brave Sri Lankan troops, supported by artillery pounding from the surrounding army camps and fierce, unceasing bombing by air by borrowed Kfir pilots who took evasive action to miss LTTE missiles have at last captured the vital Puliyankulam railway station, minus the rail track and sleepers. Anyway a very large amount of train tickets left behind by the fleeing terrorists was also captured. While the Defence Ministry is justifiably proud of having taken control of this vital military installation, as Reuters rightly said "in a battle that claimed 76 lives", the troops are now advancing in a pincer move in a fast pace - around 2 yards per hour - towards the next target - the Puliyankulam Sub-Post office. This sub post office, 20 feet by 10 used to be manned by a woman sub post mistress terrorist, whose movements are presently not known. But the brave foot soldiers of the democratic socialist republic of Sri Lanka hope that when she is eventually captured, she will be yet below the age of fifty, even if she happens to be a mother of four.

It is widely believed by Reuters, AFP and others who are in the know of things that the opening of the land route between the Puliyankulam railway station and the Puliyankulam sub post office will be accomplished within the next few weeks.

- Sonna Boy

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(Advt)

The Sri Lankan - Scene -

Air Vice Marshal on compulsory leave

Air Vice Marshal Elmo Perera is reported to have been sent on compulsory leave, following Sri Lankan military intelligence reports of mysterious attempts to buy Mi24 helicopters from Ukraine.

On the 17th August, the government-controlled SUNDAY OBSERVER came out with a Page 1 lead report with the startling headlines: CID AND INTERPOL INVESTIGATE - DID MILLIONAIRES TRY TO PURCHASE MI 24 HELICOPTERS FOR LTTE ? The report mentioned three persons, a Sinhalese, a Tamil, and a Muslim - Ranjit Dahanayake, "the alleged finanaier", Rajan Vairavanathan, "a radio and TV personality" and Farook Sally, "a former Sri Lankan Air Force officer".The suspicion was that these three were trying to purchase EIGHT MI24 helicopters "for the LTTE for use in its conflict with Sri Lanka's security forces"(!)

Apart from Air Vice Marshal Elmo Perera, similar disciplinary action is being contemplated against another top SLAF officer, according to reports.

Army promotions galore !

Sri Lanka has promoted more than 120 senior army officers to head military units created to fight Tamil Tiger rebels, says a Reuter report from Colombo dated Aug.26, quoting military officials. 23 brigadiers, 35 colonels and 70 lieutenant colonels were promoted the first time so many officers have been elevated together. A senior military official was quoted as saying: "It is unusual that such a large number was promoted together. But some of these officers were already commanding units that should have been held by officers with a more senior rank".

Faced with large-scale desertions from the army, fresh recruitment drives to augment the numbers have not met with success either

Govt. M.P. to be arrested ?

The Police have sought the permission of the Speaker of Parliament to arrest a Government M.P. who is alleged to have been seen with a midnight gang that attacked and burnt a UNP office and shops in the Puttalam district.

The MIDWEEK MIRROR quoted police sources as saying that one member of the gang carried an automatic weapon. They had come in three vehicles and caused damages estimated at one million rupees.

Bomb attack on Buddhist monk

A Buddhist monk, Ven.Akuresse Ariyasiri Thera of Battaramulla who was warded at the Colombo National hospital burns unit, following burns sustained in a bomb attack on July 29 succumbed to his injuries . Ven.Ariyasiri sustained severe burns all over his body when some unidentified persons hurled a petrol bomb at his his room around 3.30 a.m. on July 29.

Police have questioned nearly 20 persons including the late President Premadasa's widow and son, Mrs.Hema Premadasa and Mr.Sajith Premadasa.

Ex-G.A.held on suspicion

A former Government Agent of Jaffna, Chelliah Pathmanathan was arrested at his Wellawatte residence in Colombo . On suspicion that he had diverted government funds of more than 100 million rupees to the LTTE, while he was serving in office.

Carpenter's side business

A carpenter in Ambalangoda in south Sri Lanka who turned out male genital organs among his other wooden creations for sale, was arrested by the police and produced before a magistrate who fined him Rs.500.

Police are reported as saying that the man had a lucrative business turning out these wooden genitals, not only with foreign tourists, but even with some of the local womenfolk. He had been receiving orders for these in various sizes !

Intimidation by police

A vigil organised by Vigil Coalition to draw attention to government inaction over the gang rape of Koneswary brought policemen to the spot demanding the names of the organisers. The incident occured on 15th August. Vigil Coalition was formed after the gang rape of Krishanthi Kumarasamy and Rajini Velauthapillai in army-occupied Jaffna last year. When three months had elapsed after the gang rape of Murugesapillai Koneswary, a mother of four, without any independent inquiry being held, Vigil Coalition organised a silent protest at Hyde Park Corner in Colombo. The participants were questioned also about a Post Card campaign in this connection. It was seen as an intimidatory tactic by the police to prevent freedom of speech and freedom of association.

Airwoman run over by plane

Airwoman Piyaseeli who was attached to the engineering and maintenance section of the Sri Lankan Air Force was killed in a freak accident at the Ratmalana air base when she was run over by a plane which was being towed from the hangar to the runway. She was on duty controlling air traffic when she had slipped and fallen near the wheel of the aircraft.

The passing away of a people's princess

HOT SPRING departs in this issue from its exclusive espousal of the Tamil cause, to join the world in mourning the death of a very, very special human being who had in some magical fashion identified herself with all of humanity. Never has the world witnessed such spontaneous, popular outpouring of grief from across the globe on the passing away of one single individual who held no political power or prestigious office to command the attention of people who were not even remotely connected with her life. Yet, her death has revealed that she did touch their lives in some mysterious way.

Princess Diana had beauty. Glamour. Royalty. Charm. Admirable dress sense. But all these did not in themselves go to make up what she was. These are not qualities that usually go with empathy with suffering humanity. But she had that too. High fashion in dress does not go with the courage to shake hands with an AIDS patient. She had that too. To be a Royal which could demand a stiff upper lip, it is not easy to bestow a shy smile on the common folk. But she could do that. For a "young woman of our times", as French President described her, it would not be easy to relate herself to the very old, but she had that ability. As for the children, white, brown or black, they were so mesmerised by her that they could follow her, as someone remarked, like following the Pied Piper of Hamelin. She was a fond mother, with a genuine sympathy for the poor, the sick, the under-privileged, the victims of landmines......

She was not only the world's best known woman, the most photographed, the most discussed, she was in fact the world's most enthralling woman. She had sympathy for other's troubles and courage in her own. A caring person; which made someone remark: a cross between Cindy Crawford and Mother Theresa !

Dying in the way she did, at the age of 36, it only made it all the more poignant.

It was not the way to die.
It was not the age to die.

Social & Personal

7-year old Tamil girl, the youngest to pass the GCSE exam

A 7-year old Tamil girl, Nisha Santhirarajah from Edgware in north London became the youngest person to pass the GCSE exam when she gained a C grade in computer studies.

Nisha sat the exam, which is normally taken by 15- and 16yearolds after her parents spotted her ability with computers at the age of six. According to the GUARDIAN (London) report of August 22: "They entered her in September last year for a primary course at the Northwood Computer Tutorial Centre, which specialises in teaching the subject to children under 11.

"She completed the two-year course in 5 2 months and wrote a computer program for a library book retrieval system. "I like computers, but I want to become a doctor", Nisha told THE MIRROR, London.

Married

Rathini - Rawson

Dr.Rathini, daughter of Dr. and Mrs.T.Ratnavel of Watford, Herts, U.K. and Simon James Rawson, at Shendish Manor, Apsley, Herts, on 16th August.

* * * * *

Kohilam Muraleetharan

Kohilam, daughter of Mr. and Mrs.Gnanapandithen of Weston, Ontario, and Muraleetharan, son of Mr. and Mrs.T.Ramachandran of Merton Hall Road,Wimbledon, London, at Shree Ganapathy Temple Wimbledon, on 21st August.

* * * * *

Indrani Anne Sudhaman

Indrani Anne, daughter of Mr. and Mrs.T.R.Tennekoon of Maida Vale, London, and Sudhaman Thirumal , son of Mr. and Dr.Malini Arumugam of Kenton, Harrow, at religious ceremonies at Nadwa Patidar Hall, Harrow, on 2nd July, and at St.Charles of Borromeo CChurch, Ogle Street, on 5th July.

* * * * *

Susantira Kumar Thulasi

Thulasi, daughter of Mr.A.Thillainathan and Mrs.Yoga Thillainathan of Kingsmead Avenue, Kingsbury, and Suthanthira Kumar, son of Mr.N.Sanmugampillai and Mrs.Kamaladevi Sanmugampillai of Waybridge Road, Thornton Heath, on 21st August at Brent Town Hall, Wembley, U.K.

Thulasi is a Science Teacher at GNS High School, Dance teacher West London Tamil School and an announcer at Sunrise Radio. Suthanthira Kumar is Computer Software Engineer at AIR DATA, Gatwick.

* * * * *

Talented Sisters

Two talented sisters from the U.S.A. gave a very lively performance of Bharata Natyam at the Ashroft Theatre, Fairfield Halls, Croydon, U.K. on 27th August.

Garini and Divani are pupils of Mythili Kumar, Director and founder of the Abhinaya Dance Company of San JoseCalifornia. They are the children of Drs.Ravi and Easwaragowri Nadarajah of California, USA.

* * * * *

Obituaries

Thamil Eelam Martyr Lt.Col. Siddu (Sittambalam Annalingam)

Born : 4 November 1971

Died in action: 1 August 1997

A famed singer of Tamil liberation songs, one-time Jaffna district cultural programmes organiser, and "Voice of Tigers" Radio producer from 1992 to 1995, and playback singer in several Tamil Eelam short films died in action in the Irambaikulam-Omanthai district on 1 August.

Sittambalam Annalingam was the son of Kanapathipillai Sittampalam (Poosari Maniam), famed producer of Tamil folk drama, and Sinnapillai, and brother of K.S.Balachandran (Germany), Masilamani (Germany), Nagalingam (Norway), Paramasivam (Thamil Eelam), Pushpamalar (Thamil Eelam), Kanesalingam (Thamil Eelam) and Parameswari (Denmark).

* * * * *

Mrs. Chellammah

Mrs.Chellammah Pararajasingam formerly of Urelu, Jaffna, and residing at New Malden, Surrey, U.K. passed away peacefully. She was 90.

She was the sister of late Dr.K.Rajaratnam of Malaysia and wife of late Mr.Sinnadurai Pararajasingam (Malayan Pensioner), mother of Mrs. Mathivathani Tharmaratnam, Mrs. Parameswary Nadarajah, Mrs. Pathmaranee Vithuvaratnam, late Mrs. Yogaranee Thuraisamy(USA), Mrs.Selvaranee Chandrapragasam, late Jeyarajah(USA),Mrs.Jeyadevi Yogarajah and Dr. Ravirajah(USA); Mother-in -law of Late Mr.R.C.Tharmaratnam(D.L.O), Mr. M. Nadarajah(Retired Accountant), late Mr.S.Vithuvaratnam, Dr V. Thuraisamy(U.S.A),Capt. K.Chandran, Mr.R.Yogarajah, Mrs. Ruk Jeyarajah, and Mrs. Geetha Rajah.

She leaves behind several grand children and great grand children.

40 Knightwood Crescent
New Malden, Surrey. KT3 5JS
Telephone: 0181 942 7919.

* * * * *

P.Thivyanesan

Mr.Ponnu Thivyanesan, formerly of Chavakachcheri, passed away, on 22nd August. He was 58. Mr.Thivyanesan was the son of the late Mr.& Mrs. Ponnu (Ponnu Vathiyar & Nesacca) and brother of Thayanathan (Australia) and Ganaseelan (Sri Lanka).

He leaves his wife Ganasothy, daughter of late Mr.&Mrs.Thambithurai of Chundikuli, and son Michael and daughter Noella.

177, West Barnes Lane, New
Maiden, Surrey.

* * * * *

Appreciation

Poorani Suriyaprakasam

A friend of the family writes:

Poorani Suriyaprakasam was called to the lotus feet of the Almighty on 16th August.

During her short spell in this world, she led a full life, both at work as a Financial Controller, and in social life as an Aids Worker and voluntary health worker. A most bubbly character, she was able to relate to all age groups and befriend everyone, all of whom miss her very much.

She was the elder daughter of Anandhi (BBC Tamilozai) and Suriyaprakasam.

May she make everyone there happy too.

* * * * *

In Memoriam

Sundareswary Muthuthamby

Born : 27-09-1927
Died: 07-07-1987

Sadly missed and fondly remembered on the 10th anniversary of her passing away by her still grieving children Sreetharan, Sri Jayantha, Rathika Niroopan and Vasanthika Sivakumar, sisters Mrs.Sivalogasunthary Subramaniam, Yogeswary Balasingam and Thilakavathy Selvakulasingam and brother Sam Arasaratnam.

Loving wife of the late Mr.E.Muthuthamby (Lecturer, Jaffna College) and sister of the late Sivagnanasundaram (Editor/Publisher, SRITHIRAN and late Pushpam Thangarajah (Teacher, Batticaloa)

6300, Wilson Lane, Bethesda, Maryland 20817, USA Tel: (301) 320 6544.

* * * *

Jeyamani Theresa Nicholas

Who passed away peacefully two years ago, on 28th August, 1995. Remembered by her husband Albert Arasaratnam Nicholas, former Manager of Oriental Bank Berhad, Malaysia.

A tribute at the time of her death said: "A lady who practised her faith devoutly, her walk of faith rubbed into all her children, five sons and three daughters as well as her eight grandchildren.

"She had compassion and a generous spirit for the marginalised of society. An active member of the Women's Institute of Malaysia, she travelled with other members to Indonesia, Thailand and various parts of Malaysia to meet the needs of the poor and forsaken ".

Jaya Vasa", 31, Jalan Bunga Ros, 41100, Klang, Selangor, D.E., Malaysia.

* * * * *

Thanks Giving

Mrs. Lily Navamany Mills

A service of celebration and thanksgiving for the life and work of Mrs Lily Navamany Mills was held on the 12th of July 1997 at St Nicholas Church Deptford.The service was led by Rev. Sam Jeyathilekaraja and was well attended by relatives and friends.

Friends and family paid tribute to her life and work with affection. Her niece, Mrs Vima Price spoke of her life as a teacher, pothagar amma, mother and wife. Mrs Mills was a devoted sister who took upon herself the task of educating her two sisters and five brothers after the early demise of her father. As a teacher she dedicated herself to teaching her students beyond the call of duty. She was widowed early in life and successfully educated her five children. Vima touched on the good relationships her aunt had with her nieces and nephews, and, all her daughters and sons in law.

Mr Noel Rajaratnam, a family friend, spoke of her life as a pastors wife lending her strength and support to her husband, the Late Rev Jeyam Mills. He recollected many incidents where she was caring, considerate and above all spreading love where it was needed. Her deep and abiding faith in her Creator was evident in her life.

Brother Ebenezer's uplifting message was one of hope for a life in communion with God when life on earth was over. He celebrated the life of Mrs Mills, lived in faith and obedience to God. A life of goodness and gentleness born of a deep and confident faith, sustained through prayer, was indeed a life to be celebrated.

Selected Bible readings were read by Jana & Janani Mills (grandchildren), and Roshini Arasaratnam (grandniece).

The service concluded with a tree planting ceremony conducted by Rev Graham Comeck. All those present participated in planting a beautiful ceder tree in memory of Mrs Mills.

"GOD GAVE US AN EXCEPTIONAL LADY
AND SHE SERVED HIM WELL.
THANKS BE TO GOD"

* * * * *

Thousands throng LTTE rally in Geneva

RECOGNISE L.T.T.E.
AS A LIBERATION ORGANIZATION
AKTIVITATEN VON ... UNMENSCHLICHEN
SRI LANKA

Thousands of Tamils joined the march and rally arranged by the Swiss Federation of Tamil Associations in Geneva on 11th August. The procession which began at the main railway station in Geneva ended at the UN building.

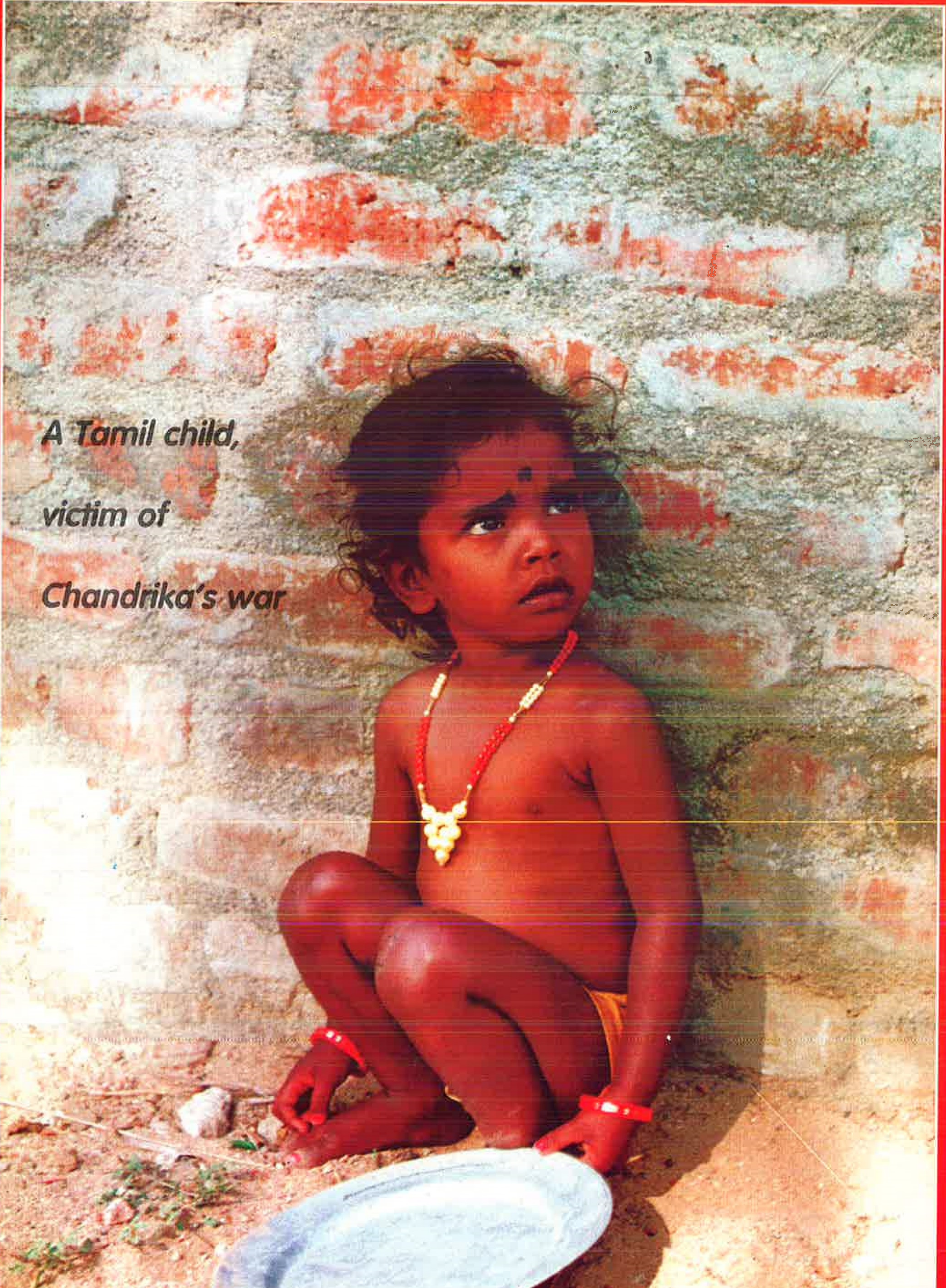
Rev.Daniel Thiyagarajah from the Vanni, Ms.Karen Parker, Human Rights lawyer from the U.S., Mr.Ajith Rupasinghe of the National Peace Council, Colombo, Mr.James Karan, President of the International Federation of Tamils, Ms.Eliza Mann, of the Tamil Centre for Human Rights, U.K. and LTTE representative in Switzerland, Nadarajah Muralitharan were the speakers. The rally ended with a liberation song sung in chorus by the thousands of participants at the rally.

NGO Briefing at Geneva

An NGOs briefing session organised by the International Educational Development, the North-South XXI and the International League for the Rights and Liberation of People was held in Geneva on 18th August. The meeting presided over by Ms.Karen Parker was held at Room No.XXII of the UN Human Rights Commission building.

The panel consisted of Rev.Daniel Thiyagarajah from the Vanni, Sri Lanka, Ajith Rupasinghe, Colombo, Sri Lanka, James Karan, U.K., Ms.Deirdre McConnell, U.K. and Francis Xavier, Human Rights lawyer, Canada.

Picture taken at a Press Conference elsewhere, shows (left to right) Ajith Rupasinghe, Ms.Karen Parker, James Karan, Sivaji of the Swiss Federation of Tamil Associations, and Rev.Daniel Thiyagarajah.



A Tamil child,

victim of

Chandrika's war

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